



THE GOLDEN MONGOOSE

TALES OF DUTY FROM THE MAHABHARATA

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THE GOLDEN MONGOOSE



THE KING OF HASTINAPURA ONCE PERFORMED A GREAT ASHWAMEDHA YAGNA*.

HE DISTRIBUTED THOUSANDS OF GOLD COINS AMONG THE PRIESTS.



RICH PRESENTS WERE GIVEN TO THE LEARNED PEOPLE ASSEMBLED THERE...



...AND TO THE LAME, THE BLIND AND THE POOR.



THIS IS THE GREATEST YAGNA ANY KING HAS PERFORMED.

HE HAS GIVEN AWAY THREE TIMES THE DAKSHINA† ORDAINED FOR SUCH A SACRIFICE.



THIS SACRIFICE, O
LEARNED ONES, IS
NOT AS GREAT AS
THAT OF THE
BRAHMANA'S.



COULD ANY SACRIFICE BE GREATER
THAN THIS ONE? THE KING HAS
SPARED NOTHING TO
MAKE IT SO.



IT WAS CONDUCTED
WITH GREAT POMP
AND SPLENDOR.

AND
ACCORDING TO
THE PRESCRIBED
RITUALS.



AND YET IT IS NOTHING
COMPARED TO THE
SACRIFICE OF THAT
BRAHMANA.



YOU BELITTLE THIS
SACRIFICE WITHOUT
AN EXPLANATION. WE
ARE AN ASSEMBLY OF
LEARNED MEN AND
WISH TO BE
ENLIGHTENED.



WHAT WAS THAT
OTHER SACRIFICE
AND WHY WAS
IT GREATER
THAN THIS
ONE?



I WILL
TELL YOU. IN
KURUKSHETRA
THERE ONCE
LIVED A
BRAHMANA...

"HE AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS HOUSEHOLD—HIS
WIFE, HIS SON AND HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW—LIVED A
SIMPLE AND AUSTERE LIFE.



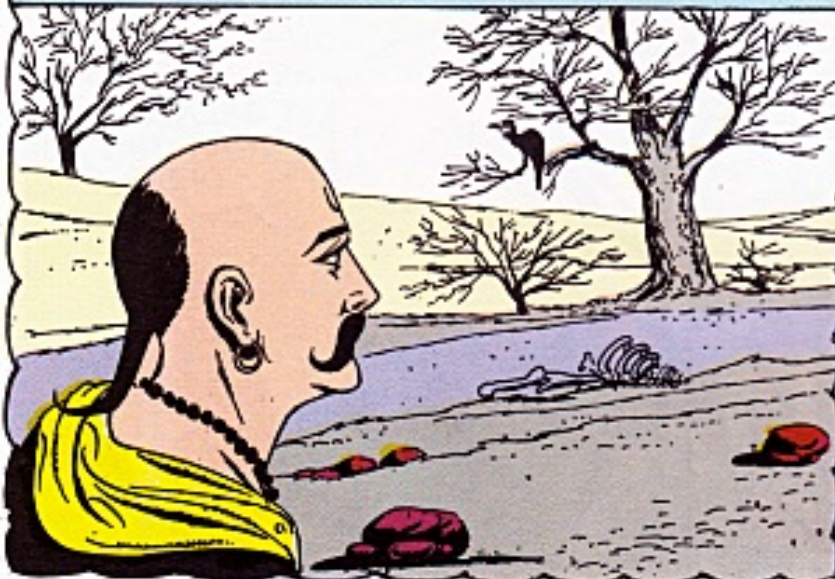
"THE BRAHMANA USED TO EAT ONLY ONCE A
DAY, AT NOON...



"...AND HIS MEAL WAS FRUGAL; ONLY A FEW
GRAINS OF CORN.

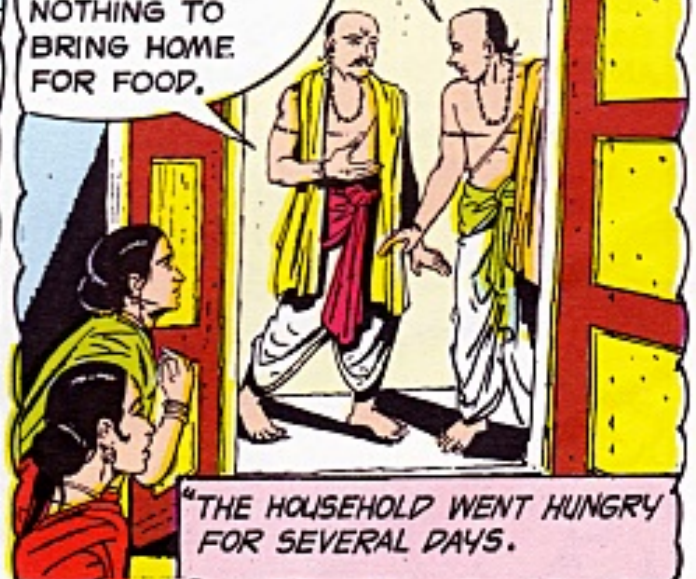


"BUT A TIME CAME WHEN EVEN THOSE FEW
GRAINS OF CORN BECAME DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN. A
GREAT FAMINE HAD DESCENDED ON THE LAND."



EVEN THE WEEDS
HAVE DRIED UP.
I COULD FIND
NOTHING TO
BRING HOME
FOR FOOD.

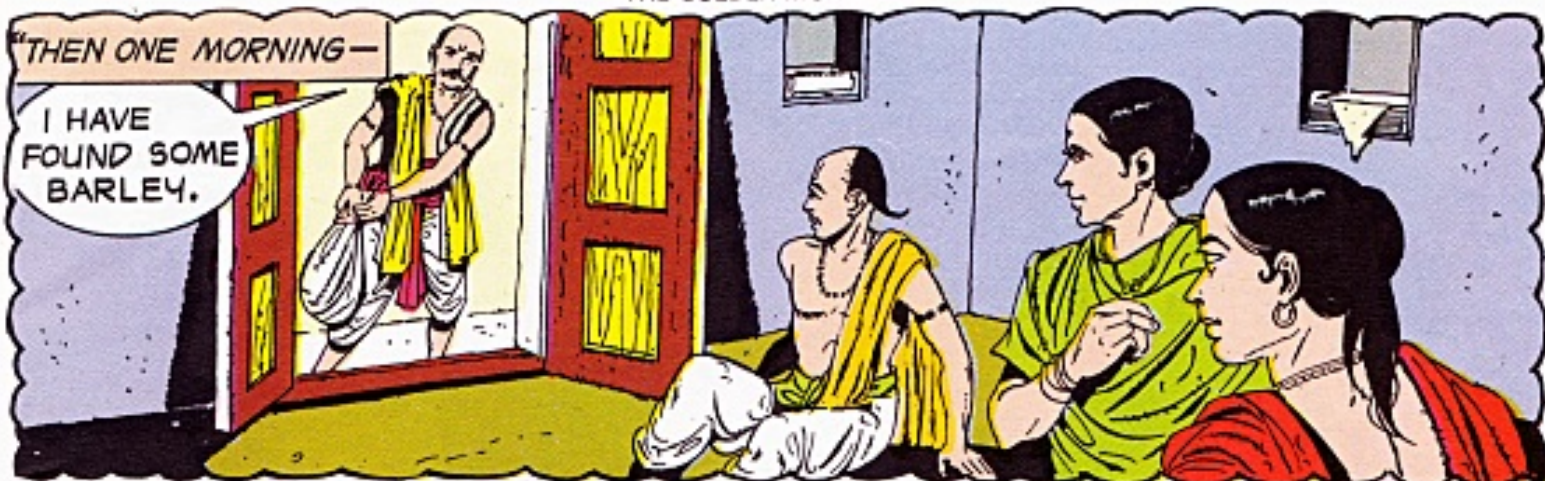
NEITHER COULD
I, FATHER.



"THE HOUSEHOLD WENT HUNGRY
FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

"THEN ONE MORNING—

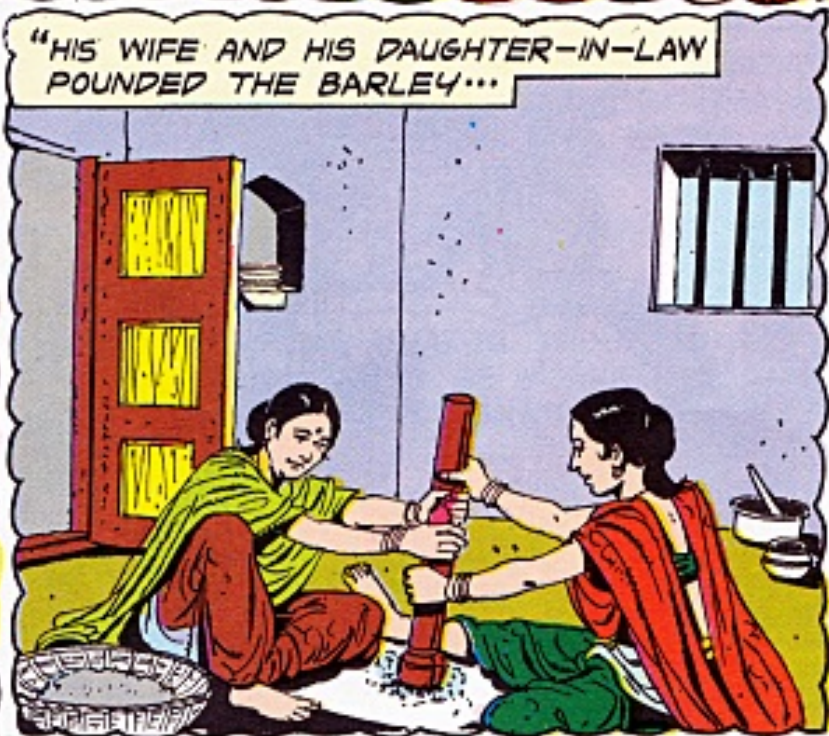
I HAVE
FOUND SOME
BARLEY.



TODAY, AT LAST,
WE SHALL
EAT.



"HIS WIFE AND HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW
POUNDED THE BARLEY..."



"...AND THEN DIVIDED IT INTO FOUR EQUAL
PORTIONS, ONE FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE
HOUSEHOLD."



"BUT JUST AS THEY WERE ABOUT TO
BEGIN THEIR MEAL—



WELCOME, SIR!
WELCOME TO
OUR HOME.

"EVEN IN HIS ADVERSITY, THE
BRAHMANA DID NOT FORGET
HIS DUTIES AS A HOST."

HERE IS SOME
WATER FOR
YOU TO WASH
YOUR FEET.

"WHEN THE GUEST HAD WASHED—

NOW
COME AND
SIT HERE.

I'LL GET YOU
SOMETHING
TO EAT.

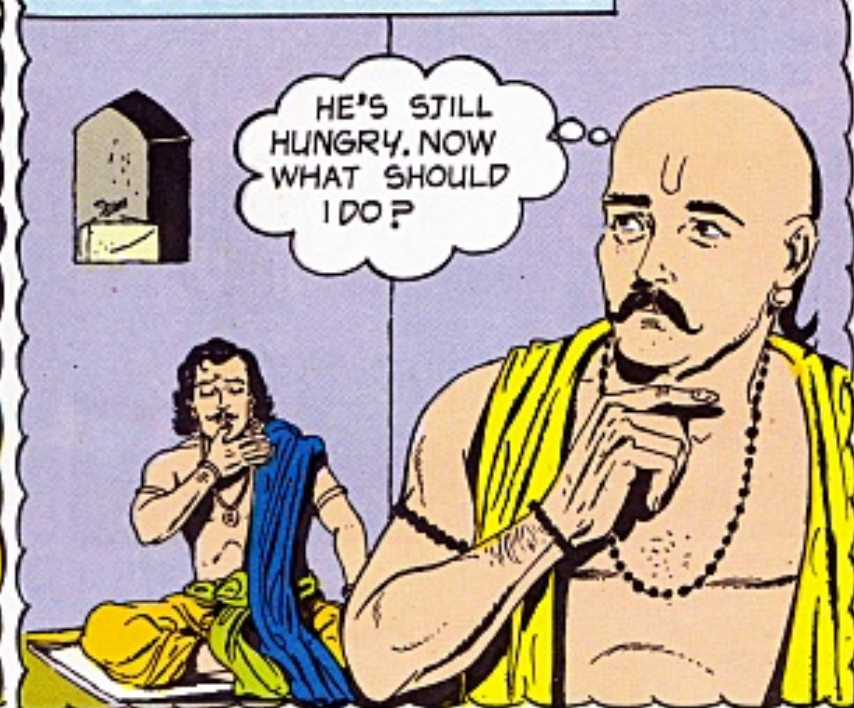
"THE BRAHMANA WENT INSIDE AND CAME
BACK WITH HIS PORTION OF THE BARLEY."

HERE, SIR.
FORGIVE ME,
BUT THIS IS ALL
I CAN OFFER
YOU.

"THE GUEST GULPED IT DOWN WITHOUT CEREMONY..."



"...AND BEGAN TO LICK HIS FINGERS."



HE IS MY GUEST. HOW CAN I SEND HIM AWAY WITHOUT SATISFYING HIS HUNGER?



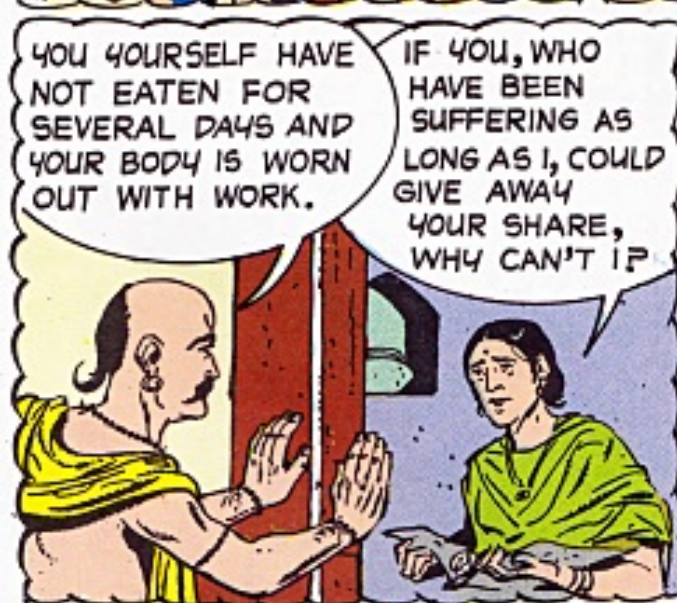
I KNOW WHAT IS TROUBLING YOU. DON'T BE WORRIED. GIVE HIM MY SHARE TOO.

I CANNOT DO THAT.



YOU YOURSELF HAVE NOT EATEN FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND YOUR BODY IS WORN OUT WITH WORK.

IF YOU, WHO HAVE BEEN SUFFERING AS LONG AS I, COULD GIVE AWAY YOUR SHARE, WHY CAN'T I?



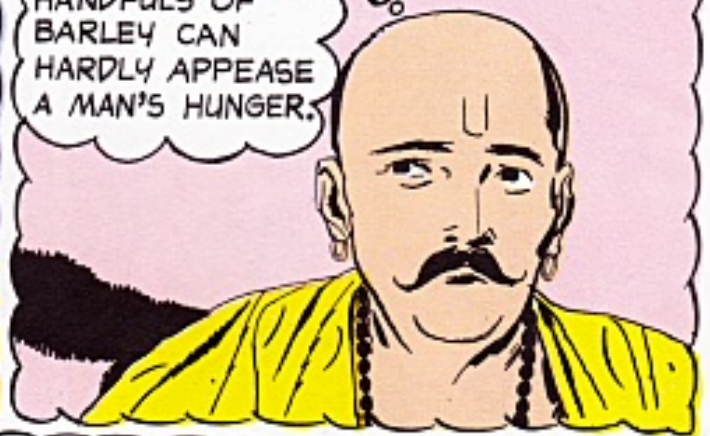
PLEASE TAKE THIS BARLEY AND GIVE IT TO OUR GUEST.



"THE BRAHMANA COULD NOT REFUSE. HE TOOK IT AND PLACED IT BEFORE THE GUEST."



HE IS STILL NOT SATISFIED AND I CANNOT BLAME HIM. TWO HANDFULS OF BARLEY CAN HARDLY APPEASE A MAN'S HUNGER.



"THEN THE SON CAME FORWARD WITH HIS SHARE."

HERE, FATHER, I KNOW YOU WILL WORRY YOURSELF TO DEATH, IF YOU SEND THAT MAN AWAY HUNGRY.

I AM YOUNG AND I CAN WITHSTAND THE RIGOURS OF HUNGER.

THE HUNGER OF CHILDREN IS VERY STRONG, MY SON. AND TO ME YOU WILL ALWAYS BE A CHILD EVEN IF YOU REACH THE AGE OF A THOUSAND YEARS.



"BUT THE YOUTH PERSISTED AND FINALLY THE BRAHMANA TOOK HIS PORTION AND GAVE IT TO THE GUEST."



"AND AS BEFORE—"



HE IS STILL LOOKING FOR MORE. WHAT AM I TO DO NOW?

"THEN HIS DAUGHTER-IN-LAW PERSUADED HIM TO GIVE AWAY HER SHARE TOO."

HERE, SIR. WON'T YOU HAVE SOME MORE?

THAT IS ENOUGH. YOU HAVE PASSED THE TEST.

I AM PLEASED WITH ALL OF YOU. YOU WERE PREPARED TO SACRIFICE EVEN YOUR LIVES FOR YOUR DHARMA*.

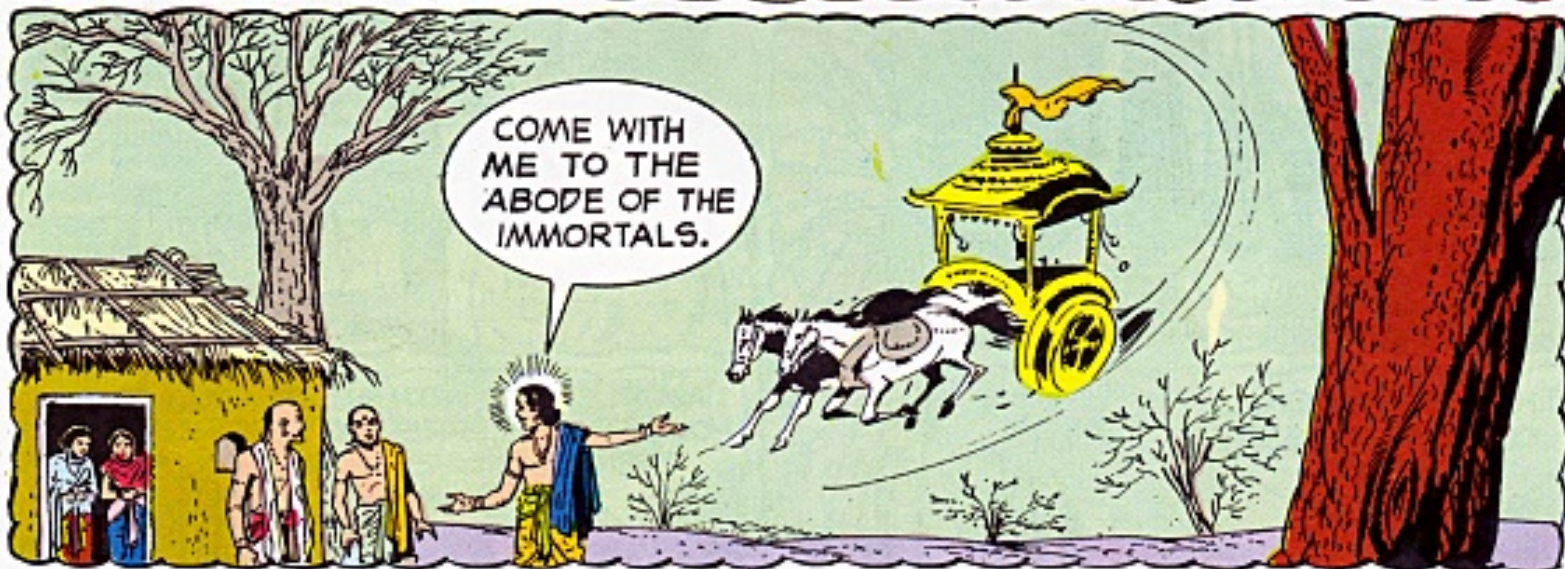
HUNGER DRIVES AWAY RIGHTEOUS THOUGHTS.

THEREFORE ONE WHO CONQUERS HUNGER HAS WON HEAVEN FOR HIMSELF. YOUR SACRIFICE HAS IMPRESSED EVEN THE DEITIES.

HE IS A DEVA!

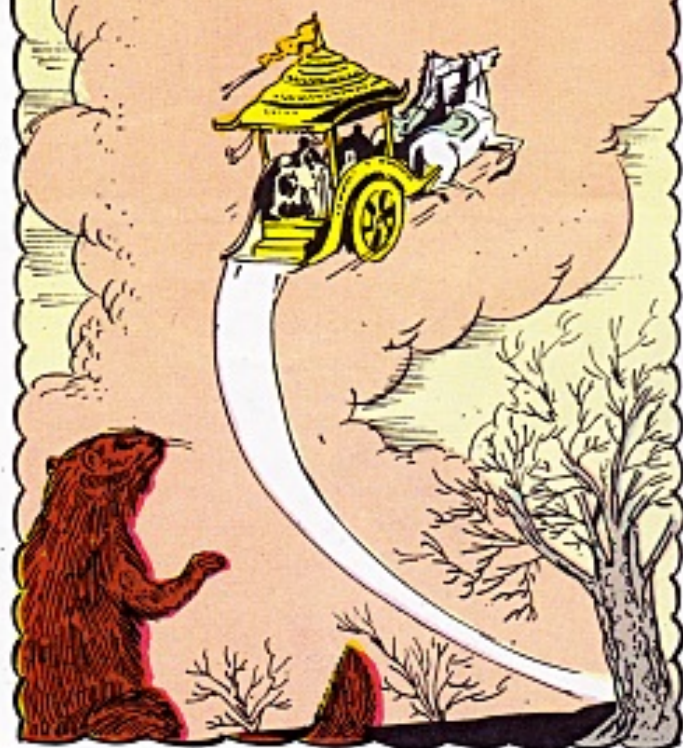


COME WITH ME TO THE ABODE OF THE IMMORTALS.



AND THE DEVA TOOK THE BRAHMANA AND HIS FAMILY TO HEAVEN.

I WAS A WITNESS TO ALL THOSE WONDROUS HAPPENINGS. LATER, I WENT UP TO THE PLACE WHERE THE BRAHMANA HAD STOOD WHILE SERVING THE GUEST.



"THERE I SAW A SCATTERING OF BARLEY FLOUR ON THE FLOOR. I ROLLED OVER IT..."



"...AND TO MY ASTONISHMENT, ONE HALF OF MY BODY BECAME GOLDEN!"



SINCE THEN I HAVE BEEN TO EVERY PLACE WHERE A SACRIFICE HAS BEEN CONDUCTED...



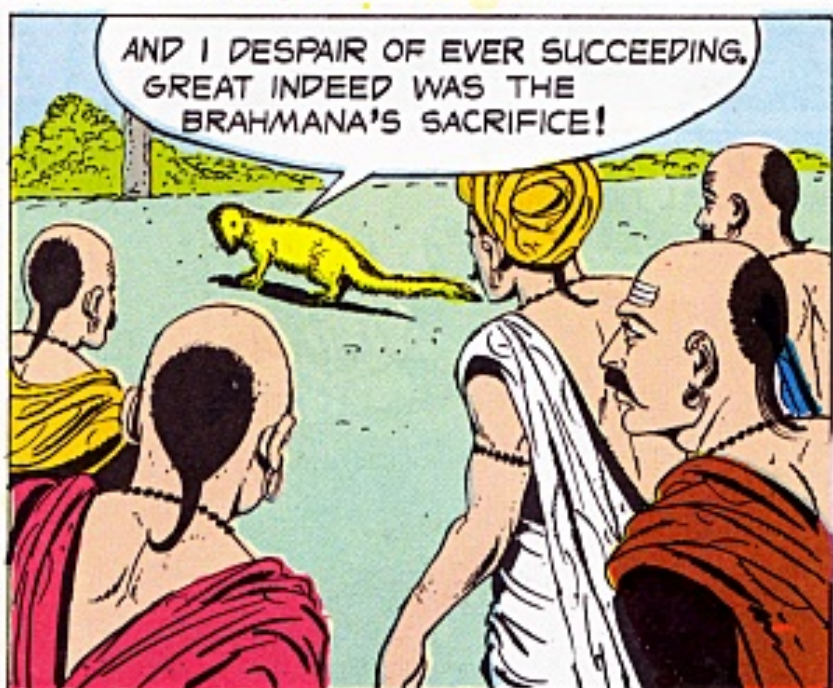
"...AND I HAVE ROLLED OVER SEVERAL SACRIFICIAL GROUNDS IN THE HOPE OF TURNING THE OTHER HALF OF MY BODY INTO GOLD..."



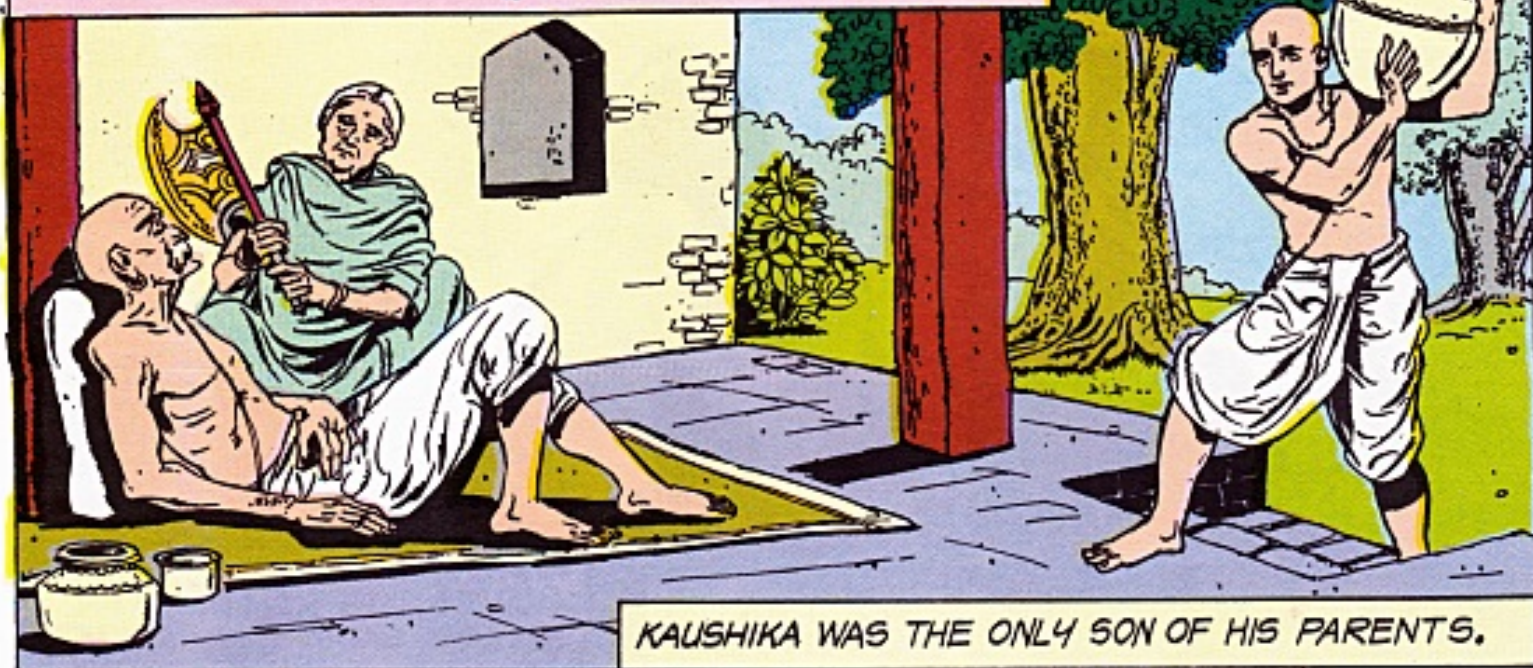
"...BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS."



AND I DESPAIR OF EVER SUCCEEDING. GREAT INDEED WAS THE BRAHMANA'S SACRIFICE!



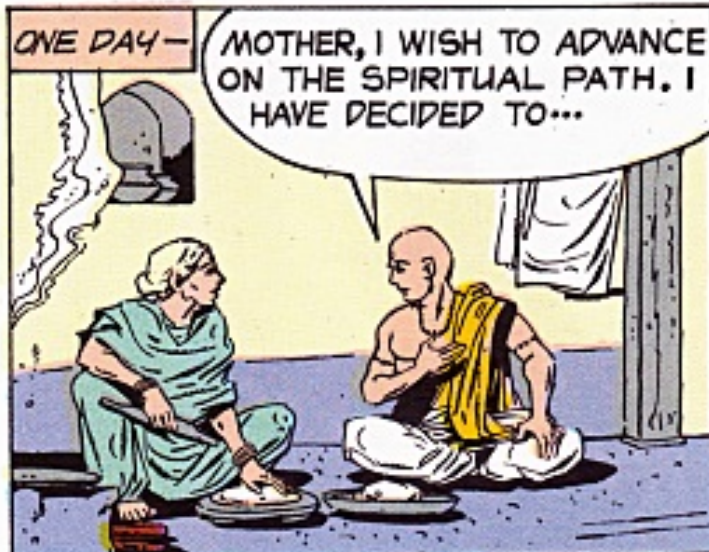
THE ENLIGHTENED BUTCHER



KAUSHIKA WAS THE ONLY SON OF HIS PARENTS.

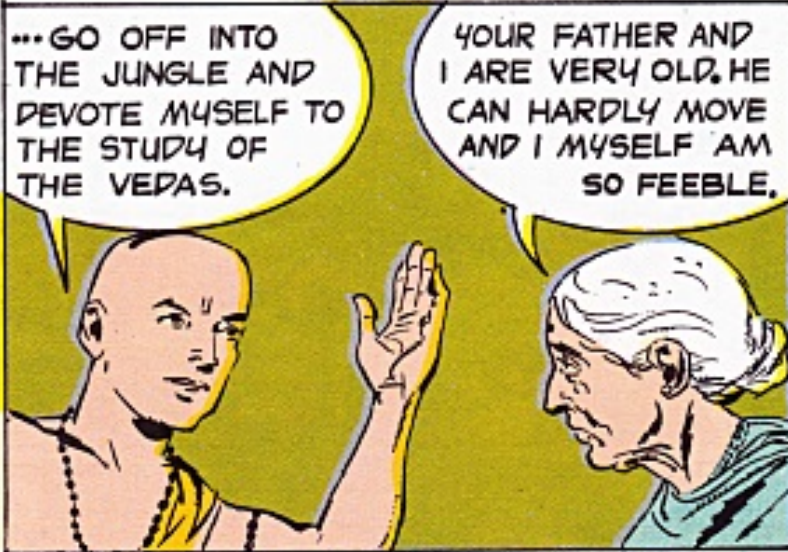
ONE DAY—

MOTHER, I WISH TO ADVANCE ON THE SPIRITUAL PATH. I HAVE DECIDED TO...

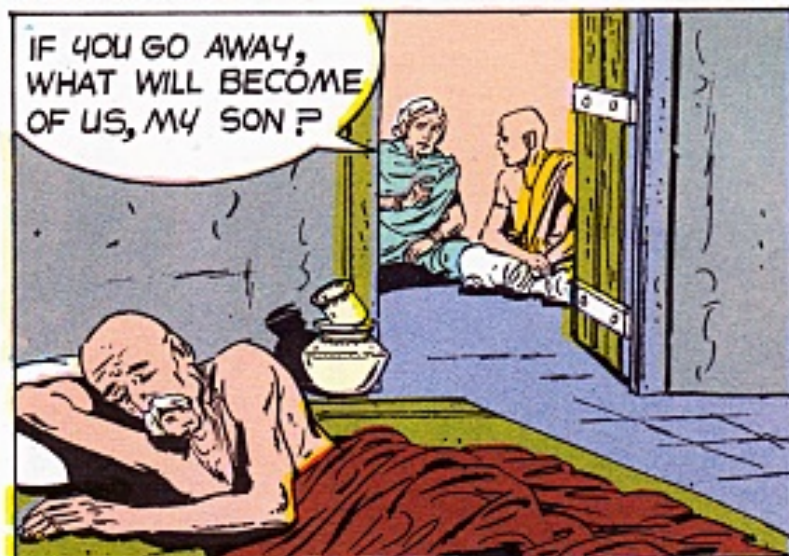


...GO OFF INTO THE JUNGLE AND DEVOTE MYSELF TO THE STUDY OF THE VEDAS.

YOUR FATHER AND I ARE VERY OLD. HE CAN HARDLY MOVE AND I MYSELF AM SO FEEBLE.

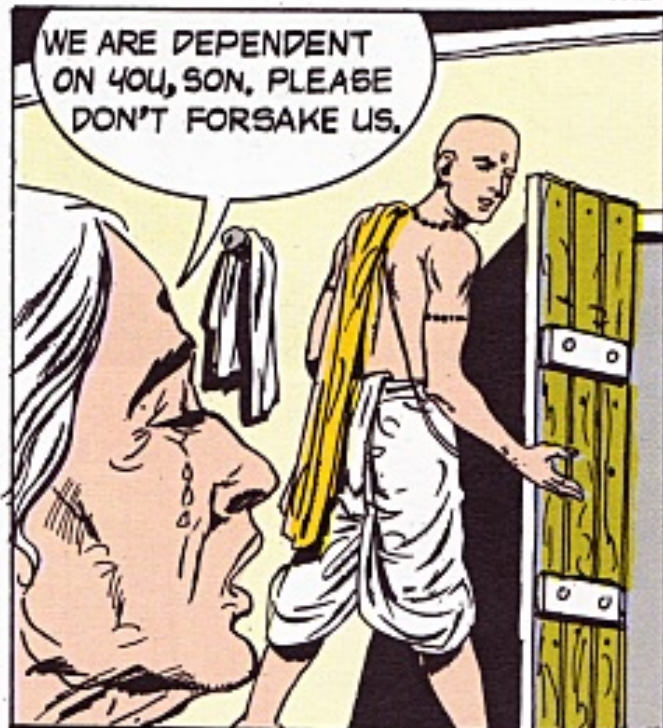


IF YOU GO AWAY, WHAT WILL BECOME OF US, MY SON?

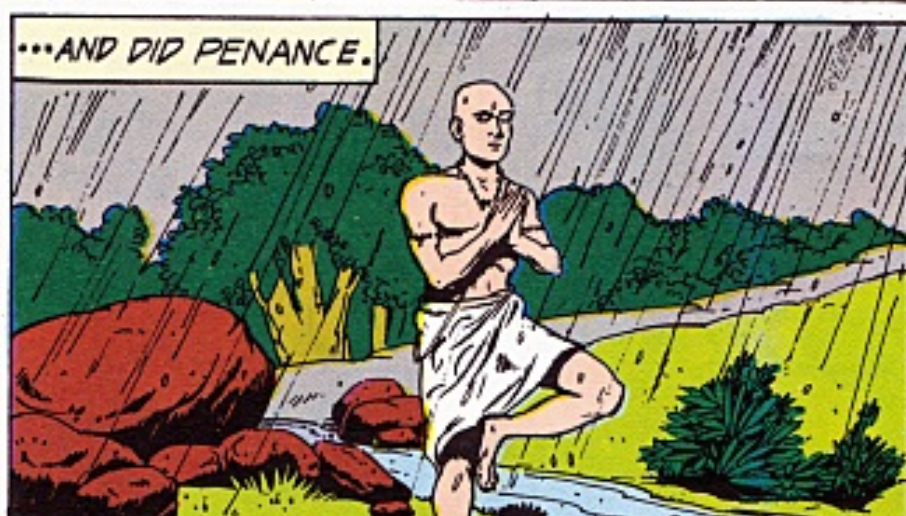
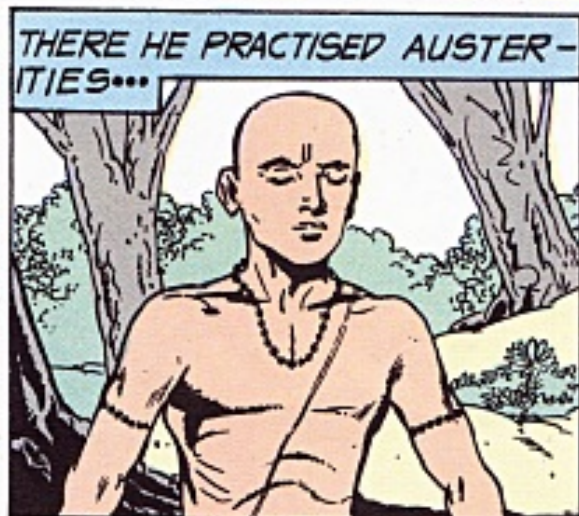
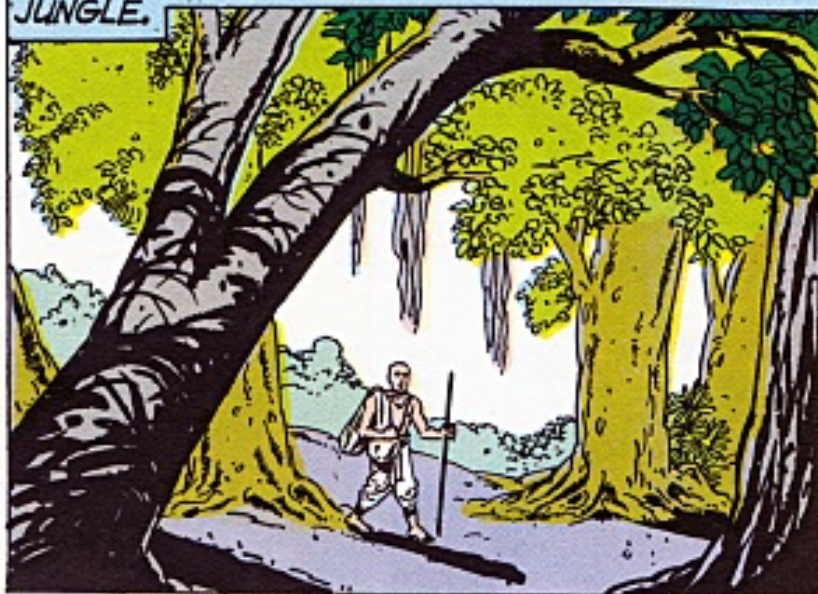


WHO WILL FETCH FOOD AND WATER FOR US? WHO WILL ATTEND TO OUR NEEDS WHEN YOU ARE GONE?





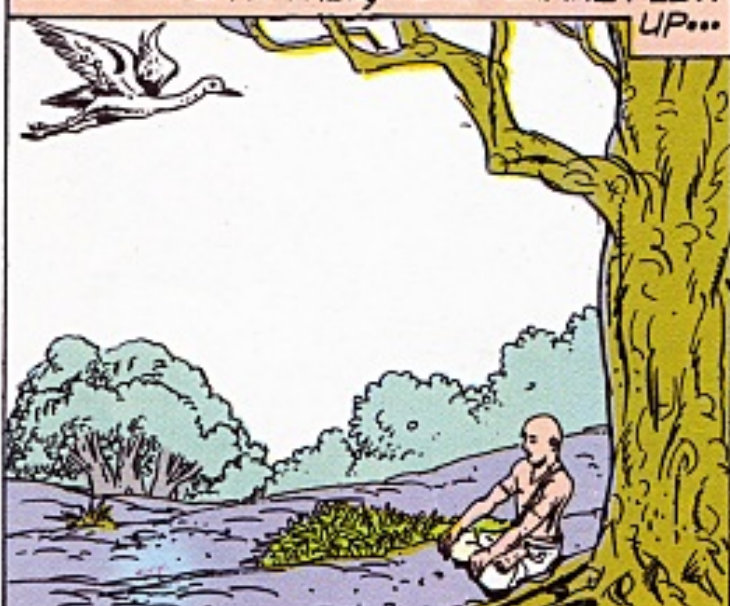
BUT TURNING HIS BACK ON THE VERY MOTHER WHO HAD GIVEN BIRTH TO HIM AND NURTURED HIM, THE YOUNG MAN WALKED OFF INTO THE JUNGLE.



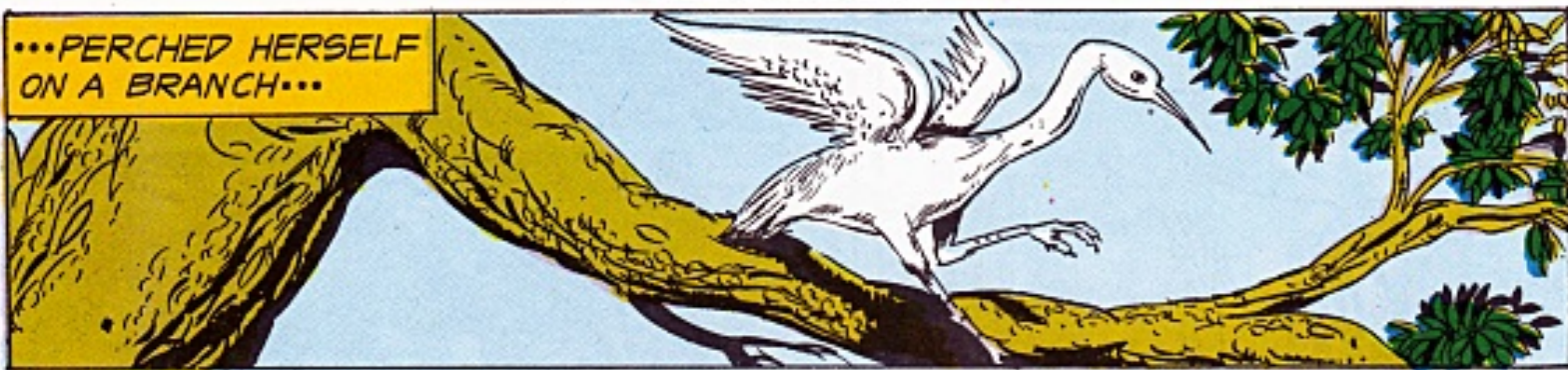
THE SEASONS CAME AND WENT AND KAUSHIKA ACQUIRED GREAT POWER.



THEN ONE AFTERNOON, AS HE WAS MEDITATING UNDER A TREE, A SHE-CRANE FLEW UP...



...PERCHED HERSELF
ON A BRANCH...



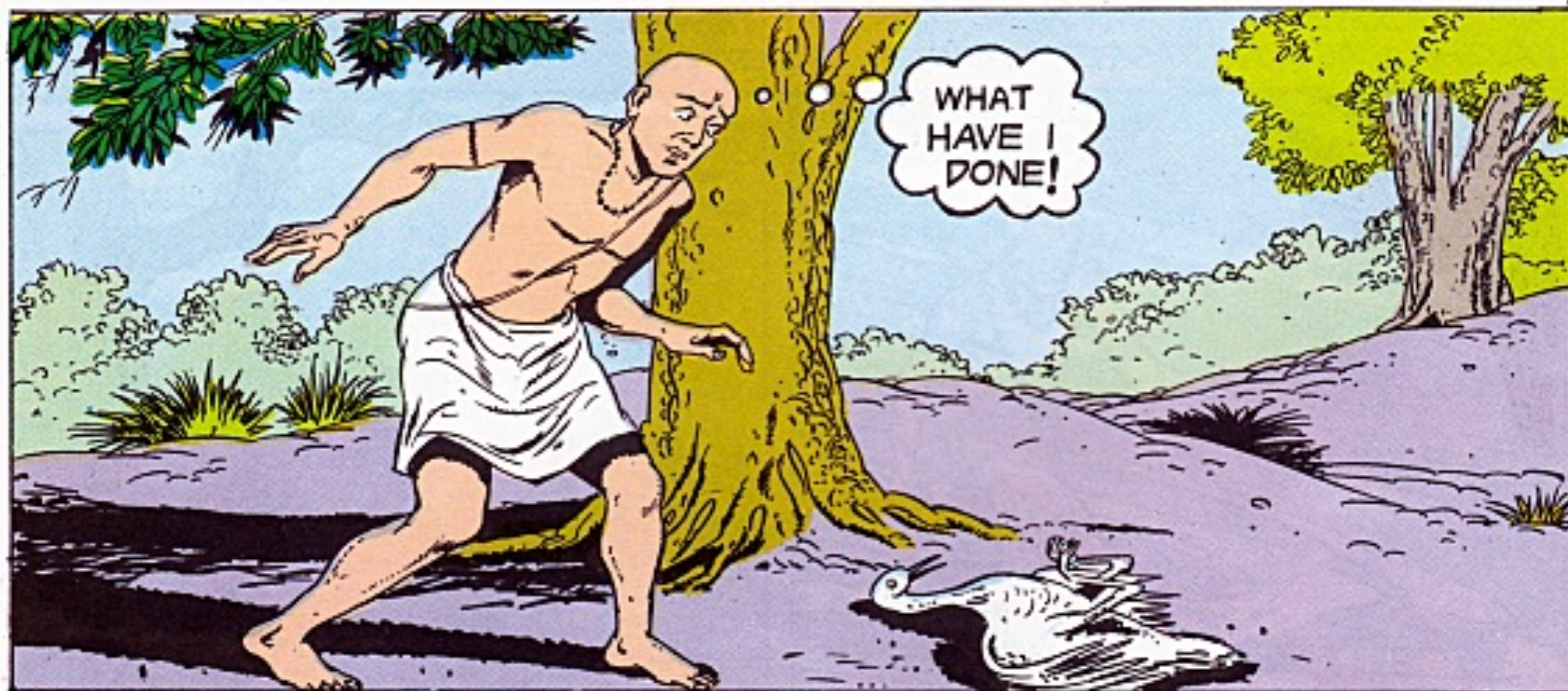
...AND—

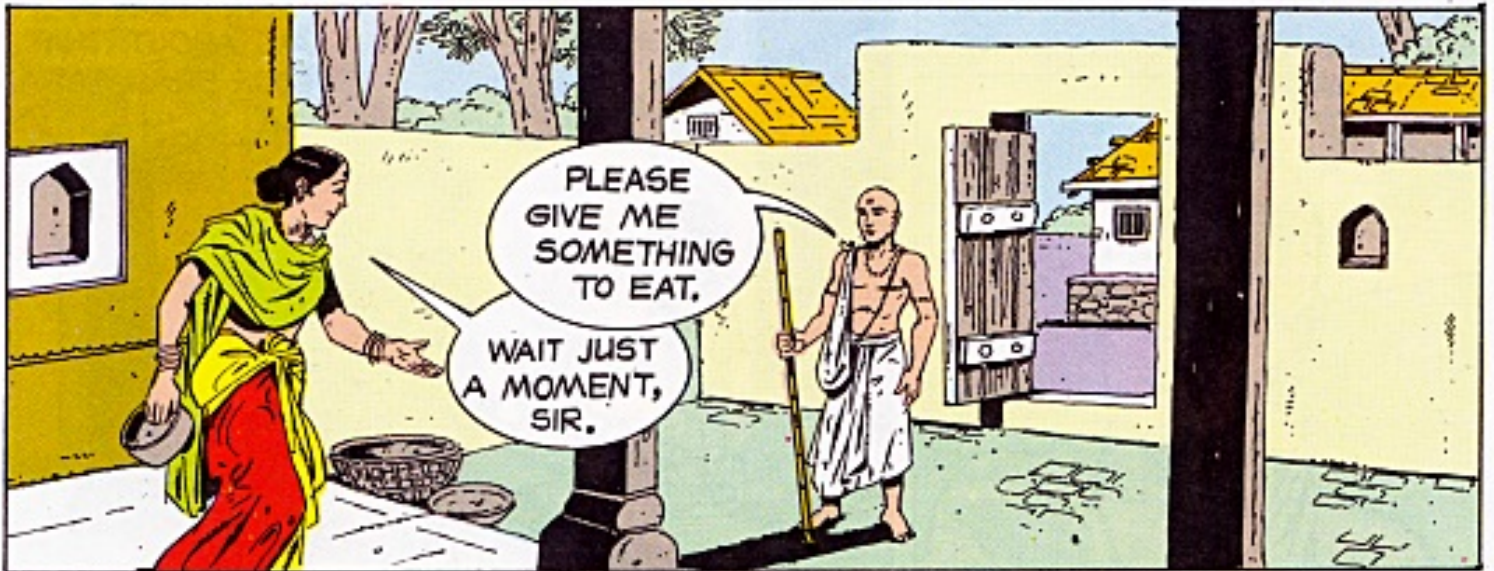
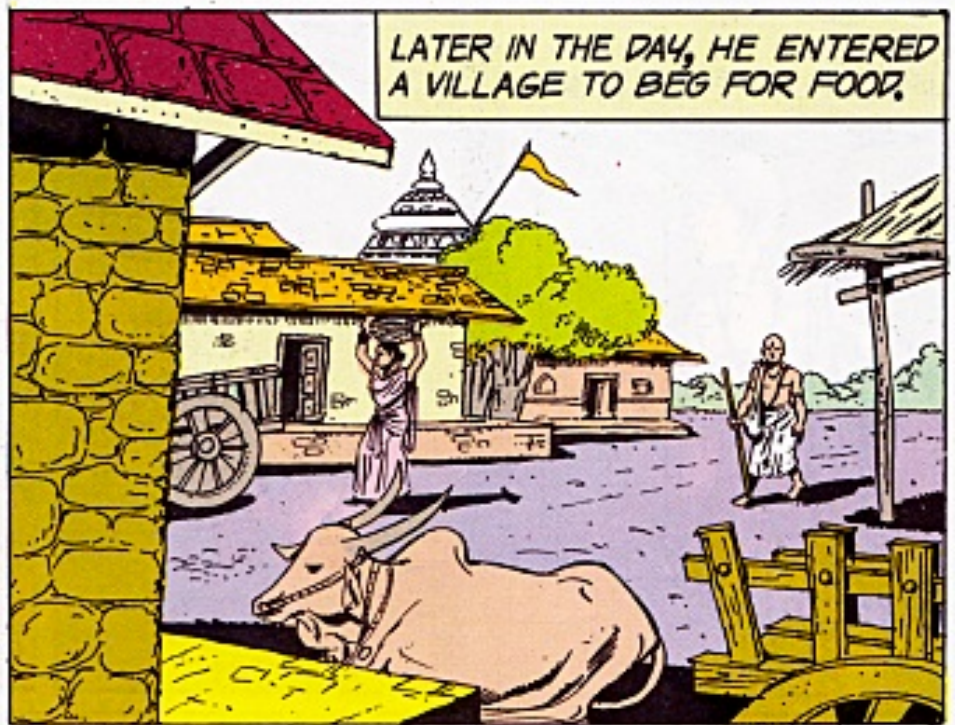


OH, YOU
MISERABLE
CREATURE!

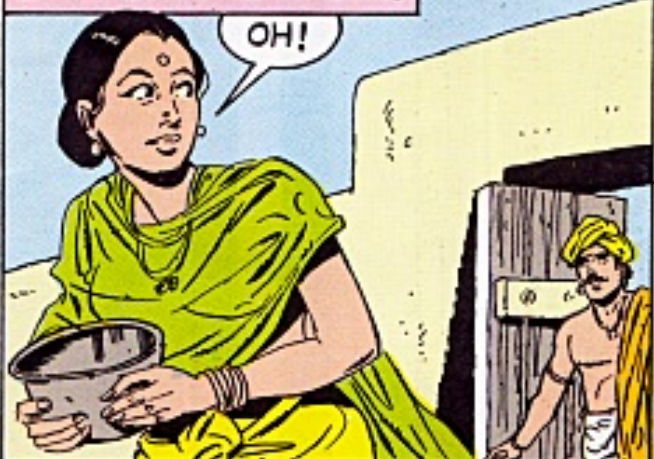


UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE
YOGI'S FIERY GAZE, THE BIRD
FELL LIFELESS TO THE
GROUND.



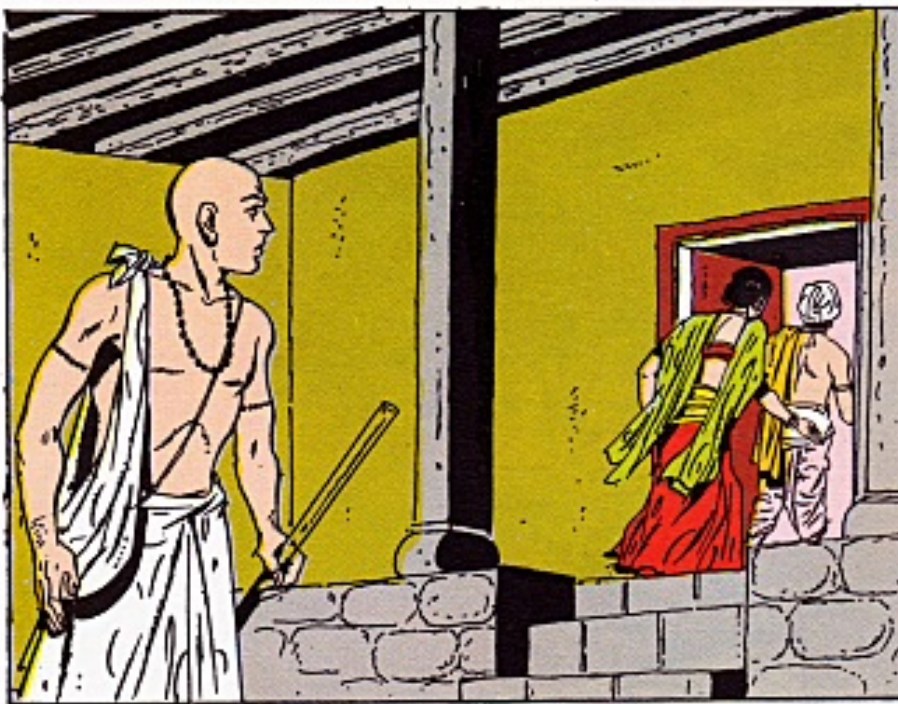


BUT WHILE THE WOMAN WAS CLEANING THE VESSEL IN WHICH SHE GAVE ALMS, HER HUSBAND SUDDENLY ENTERED THE HOUSE.



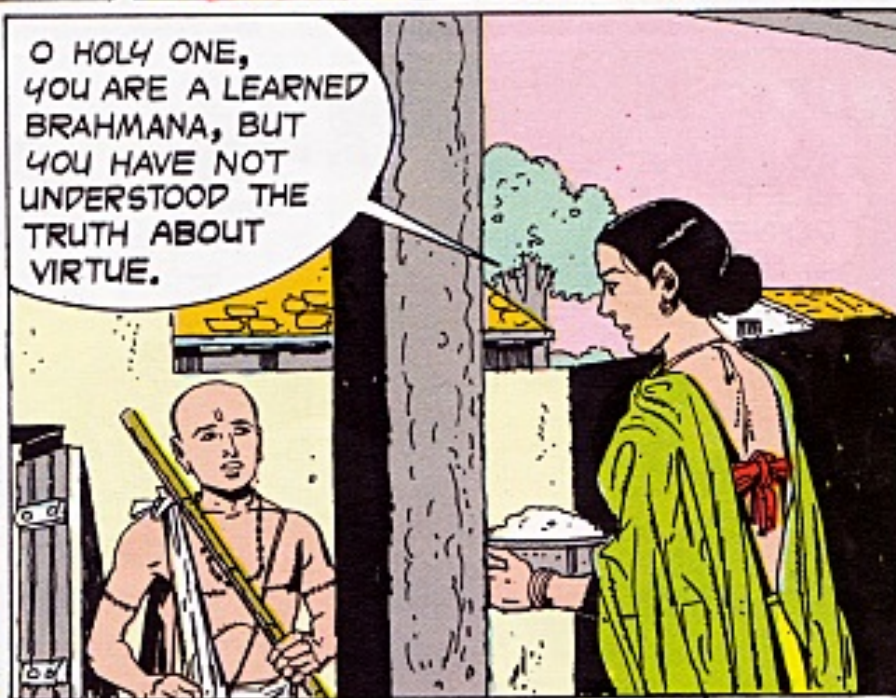
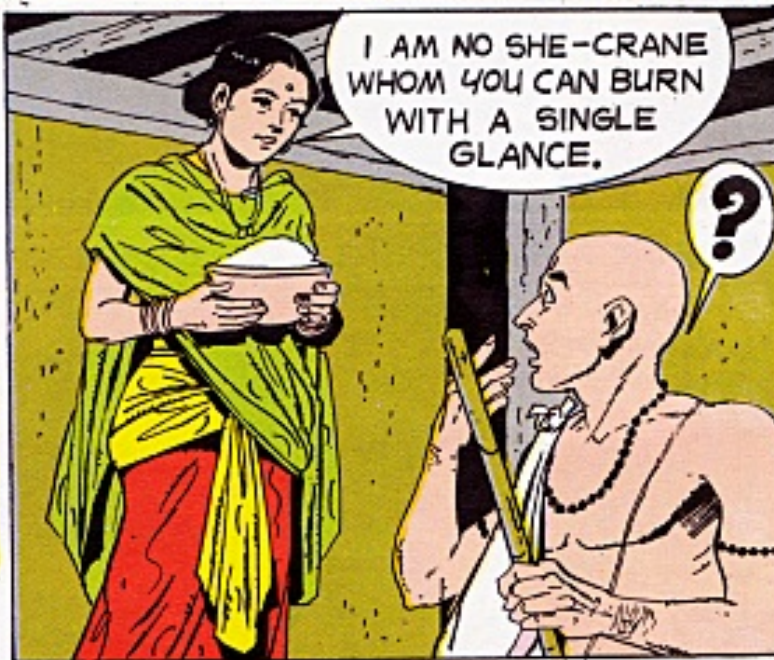
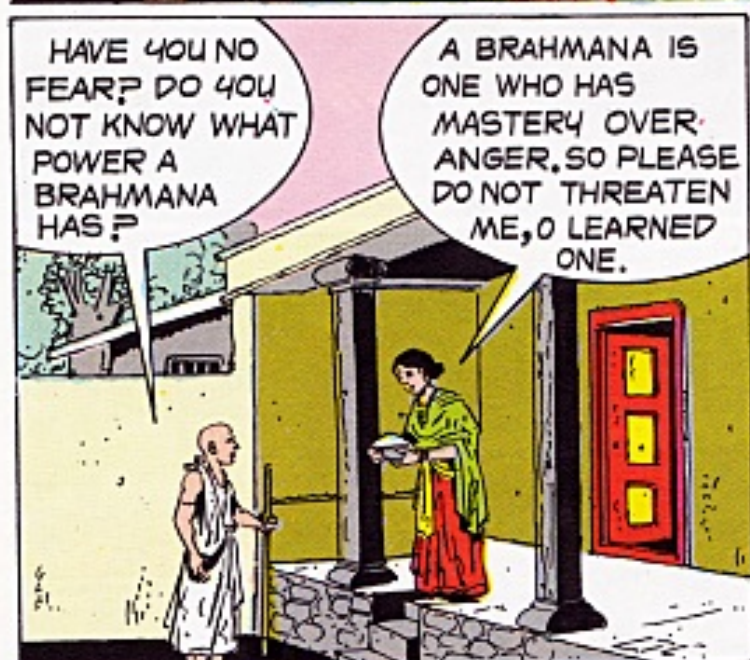
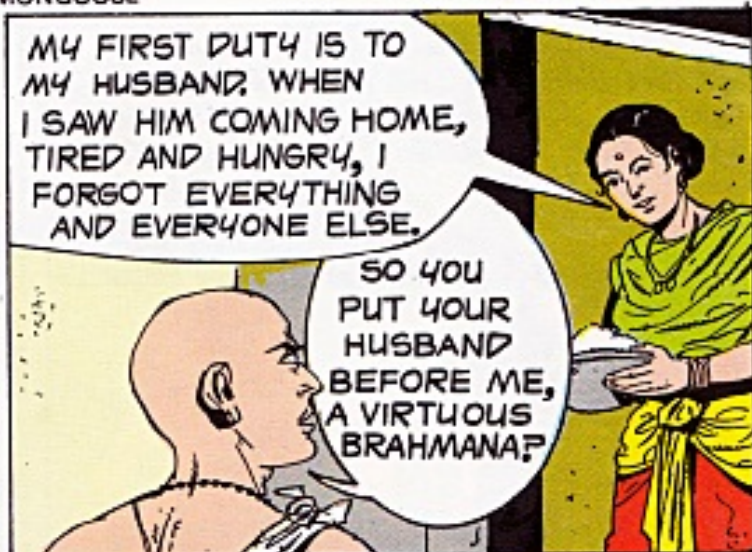
SO SHE IMMEDIATELY KEPT THE VESSEL DOWN AND WENT TO ATTEND TO HIM.





AS THE WOMAN WAS WAITING ON HER HUSBAND, KAUSHIKA'S ANGER MOUNTED.



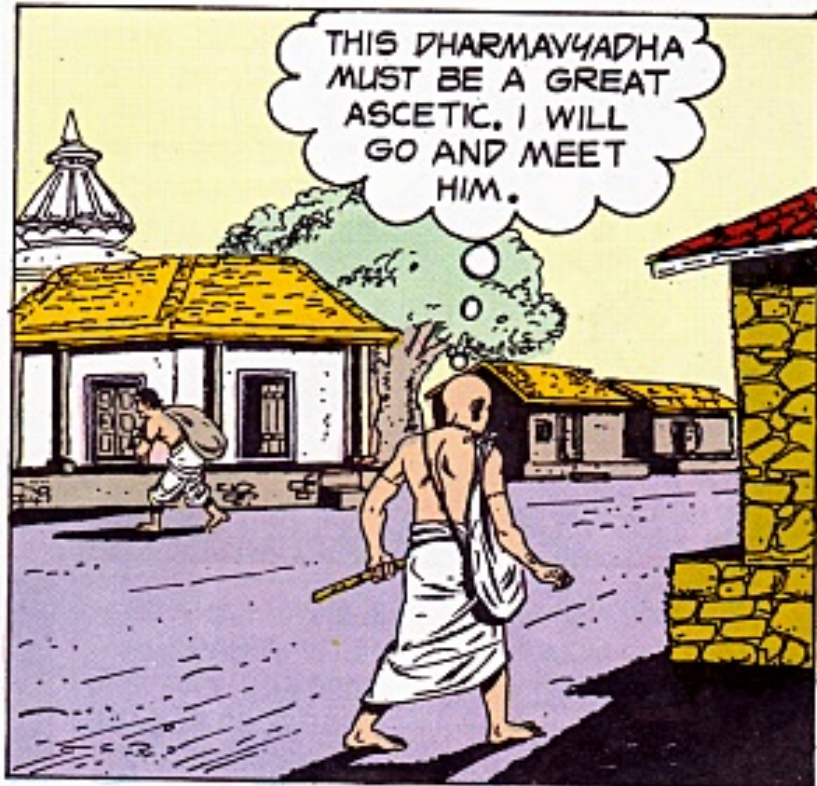


IF YOU WISH TO BE ENLIGHTENED ON THE SUBJECT, YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR DHARMAVYADHA, WHO RESIDES IN MITHILA.

I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU. I WILL DO AS YOU SAY.



THIS DHARMAVYADHA MUST BE A GREAT ASCETIC. I WILL GO AND MEET HIM.



KAUSHIKA WENT TO MITHILA AND MADE ENQUIRIES—

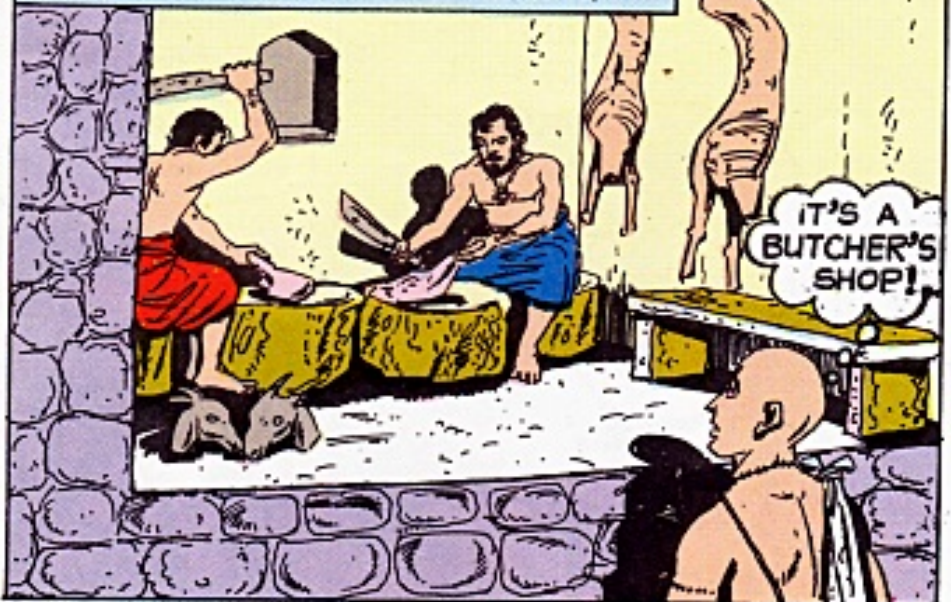
I AM LOOKING FOR DHARMAVYADHA.

YOU'LL FIND HIM IN THAT SHOP OVER THERE.



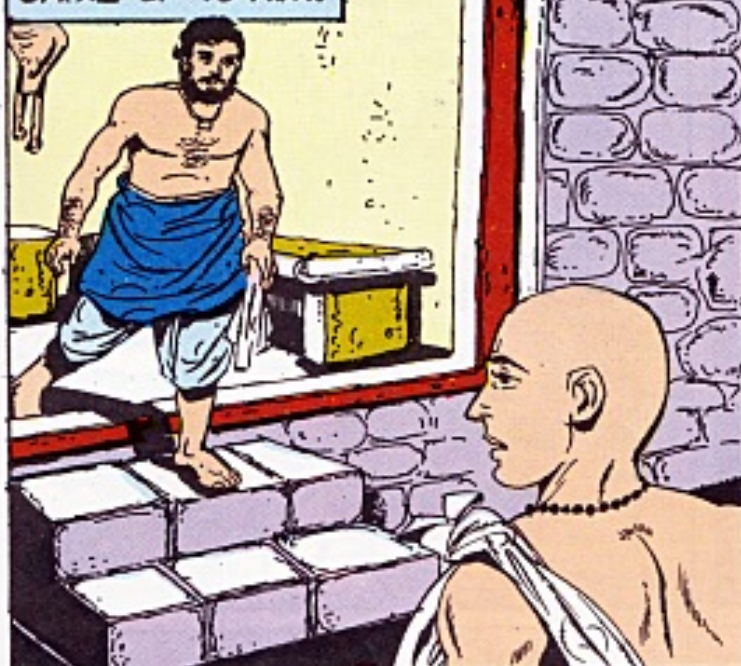
WHAT WOULD THE ASCETIC BE DOING IN A SHOP?

WHEN HE WALKED UP TO THE SHOP—

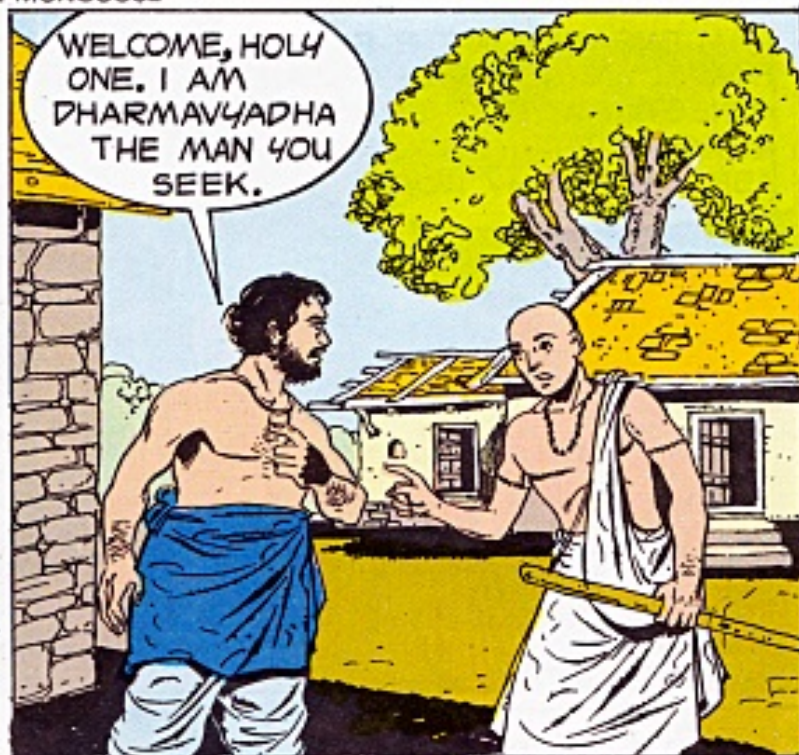


IT'S A BUTCHER'S SHOP!

AS HE STOOD THERE PERPLEXED, A MAN CAME UP TO HIM.



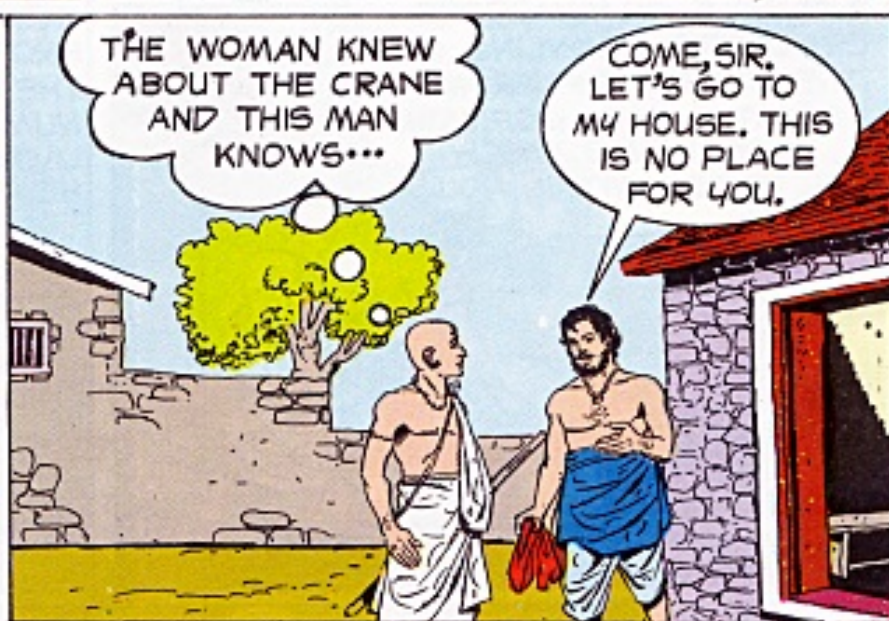
WELCOME, HOLY ONE. I AM DHARMAVYADHA THE MAN YOU SEEK.



I KNOW YOU HAVE BEEN SENT BY A WOMAN. AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE TOO, I KNOW.



THE WOMAN KNEW ABOUT THE CRANE AND THIS MAN KNOWS...



COME, SIR. LET'S GO TO MY HOUSE. THIS IS NO PLACE FOR YOU.

SUCH A SINFUL PROFESSION DOES NOT BEFIT YOU. YOU MUST BE ASHAMED OF IT.

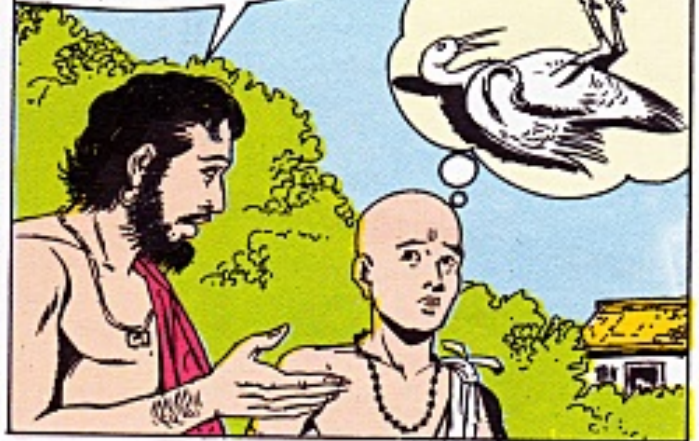
I AM NOT.



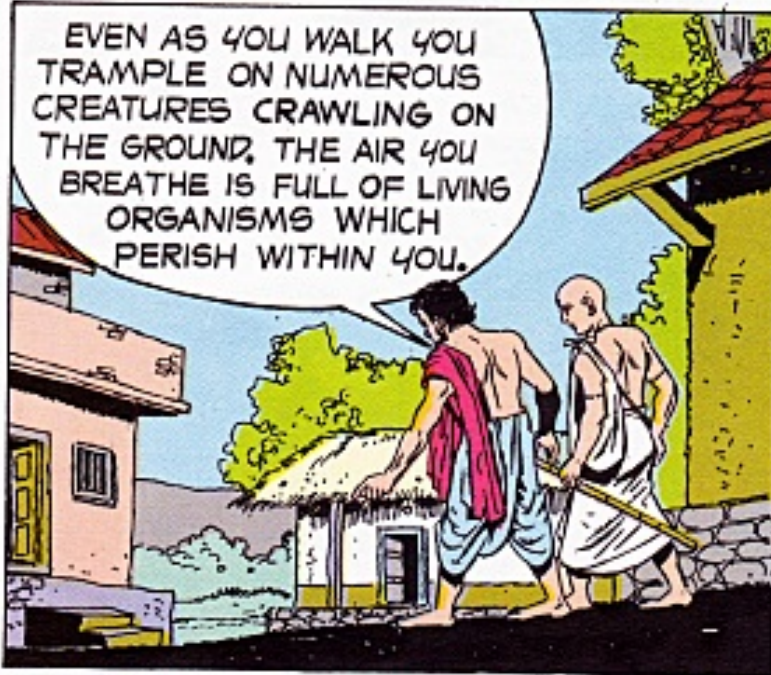
I AM ENGAGED IN THE FAMILY TRADE, AND I WORK HARD AND HONESTLY AT IT. THERE'S NO REASON WHY I SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF MY WORK.



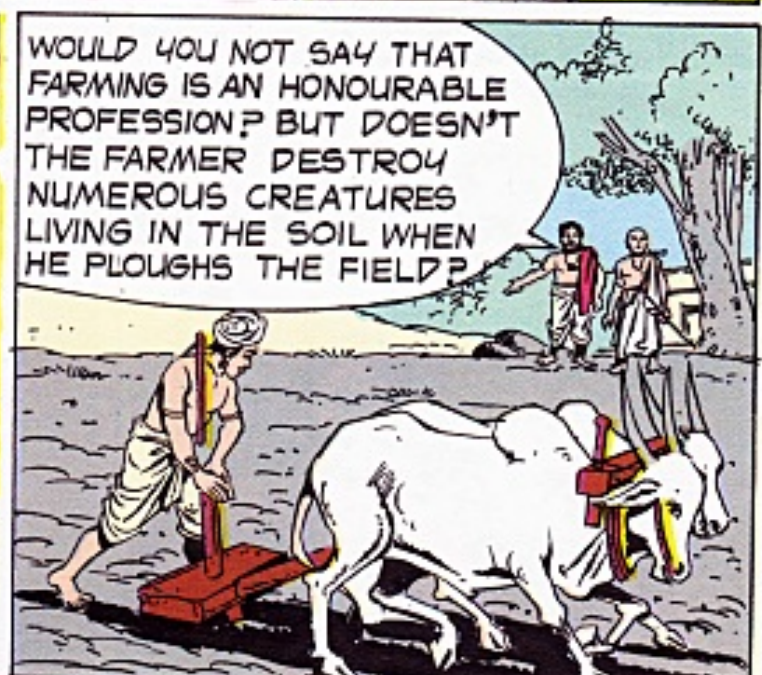
IF I DO INJURY TO OTHER CREATURES, SO DO YOU. THERE IS NOT A MAN ON EARTH WHO IS FREE FROM THE SIN OF DOING INJURY TO ANIMAL LIFE.



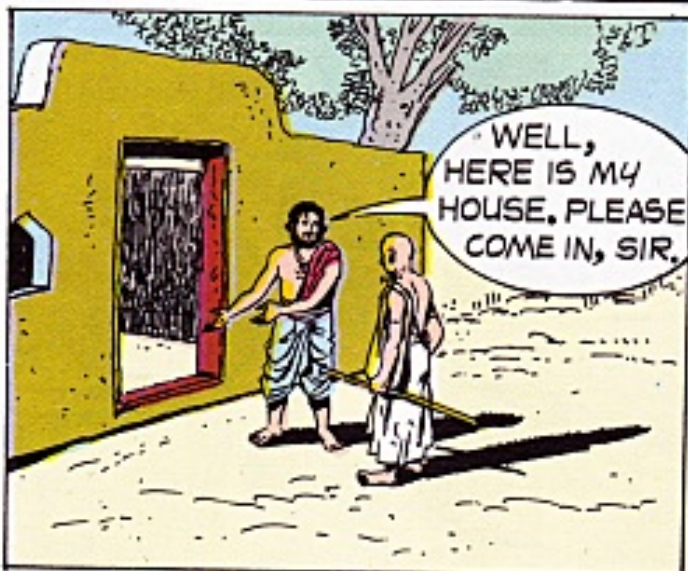
EVEN AS YOU WALK YOU TRAMPLE ON NUMEROUS CREATURES CRAWLING ON THE GROUND. THE AIR YOU BREATHE IS FULL OF LIVING ORGANISMS WHICH PERISH WITHIN YOU.



WOULD YOU NOT SAY THAT FARMING IS AN HONOURABLE PROFESSION? BUT DOESN'T THE FARMER DESTROY NUMEROUS CREATURES LIVING IN THE SOIL WHEN HE PLOUGHS THE FIELD?

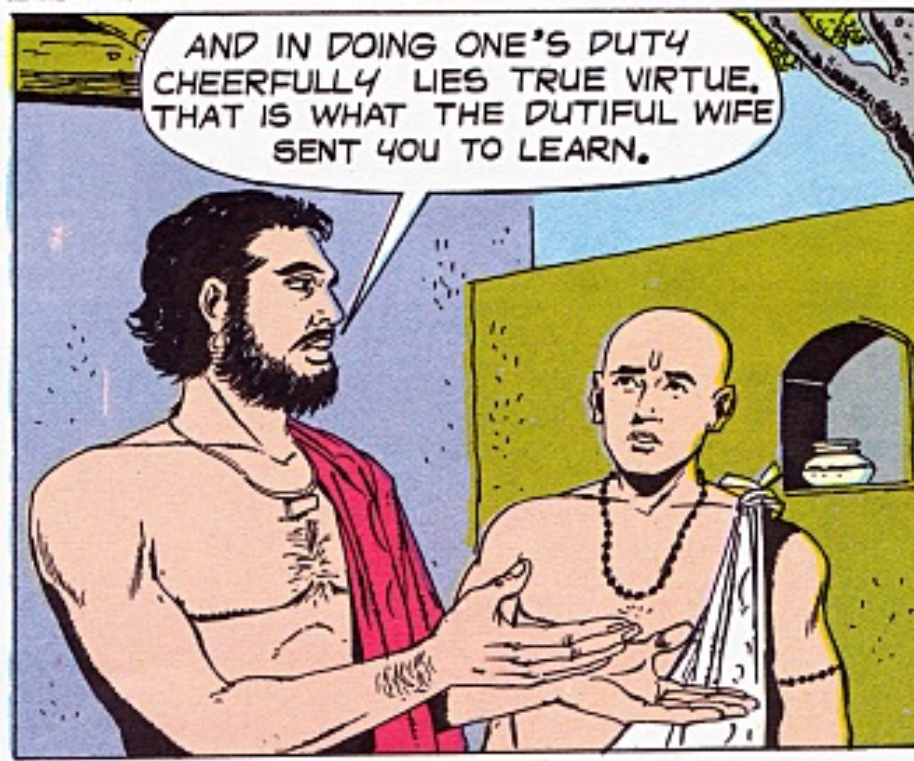
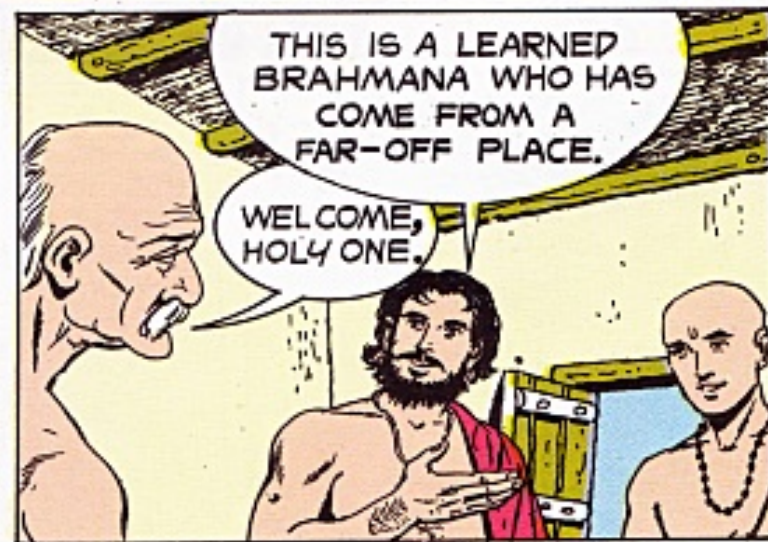
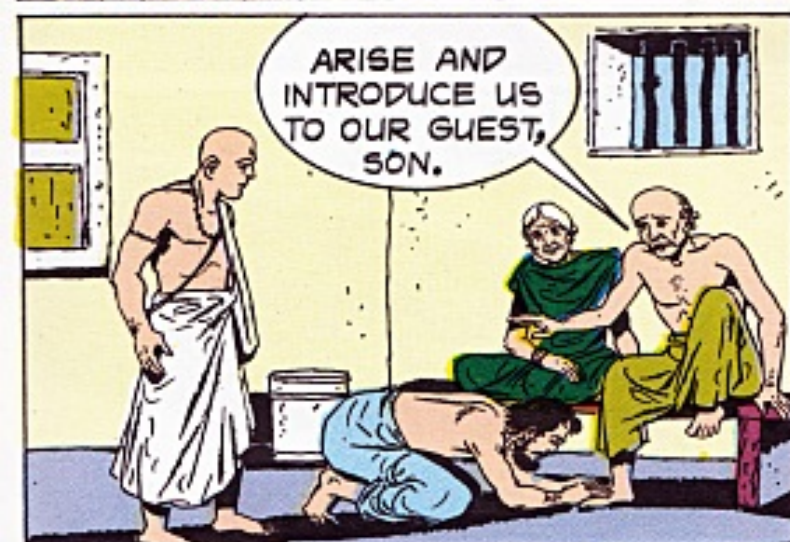
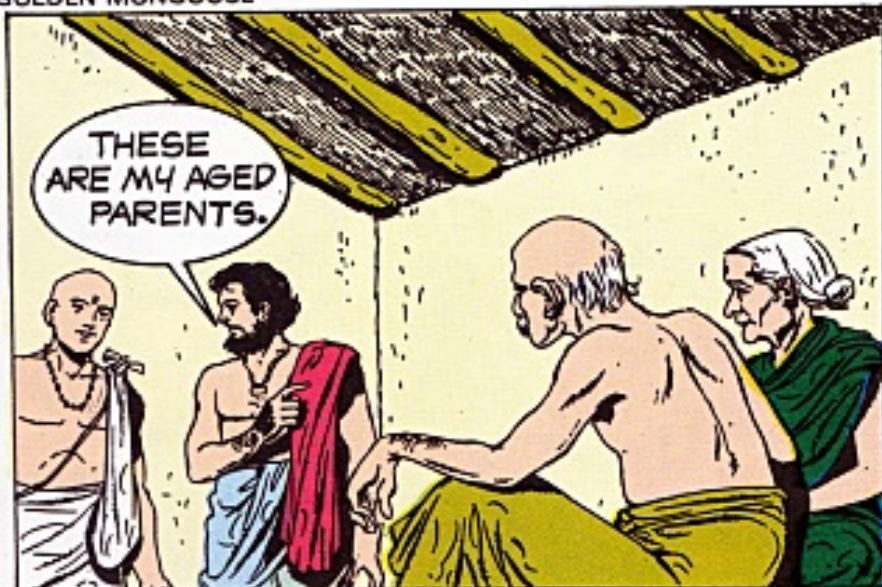


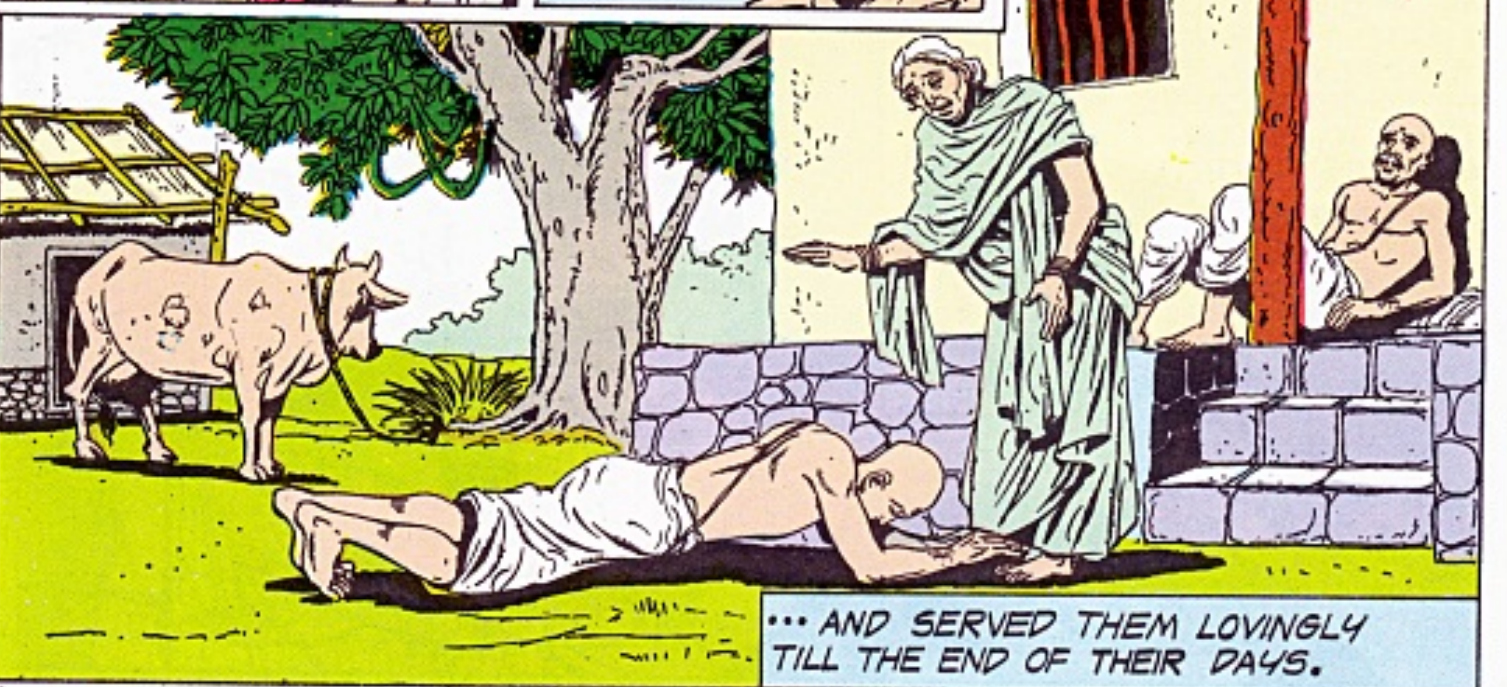
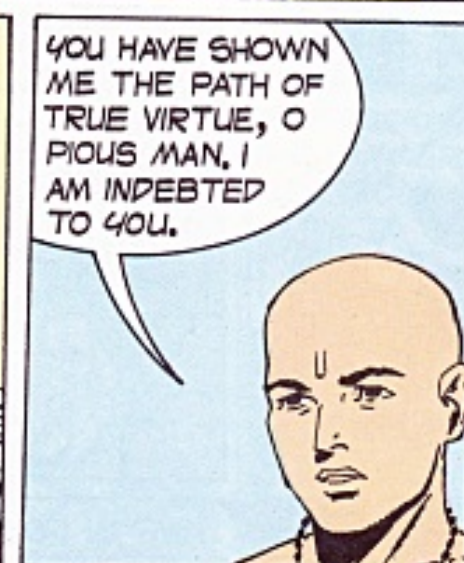
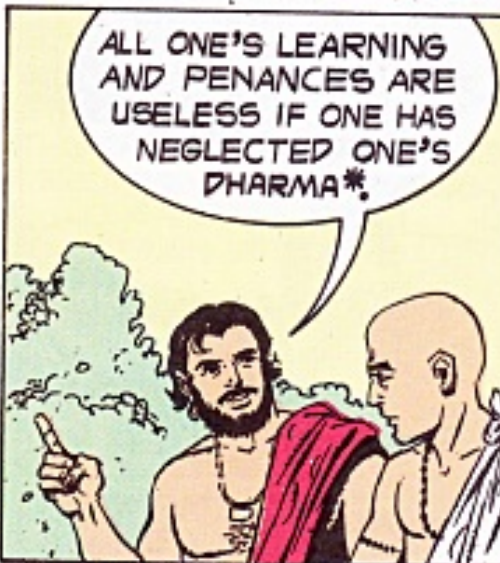
WELL, HERE IS MY HOUSE. PLEASE COME IN, SIR.



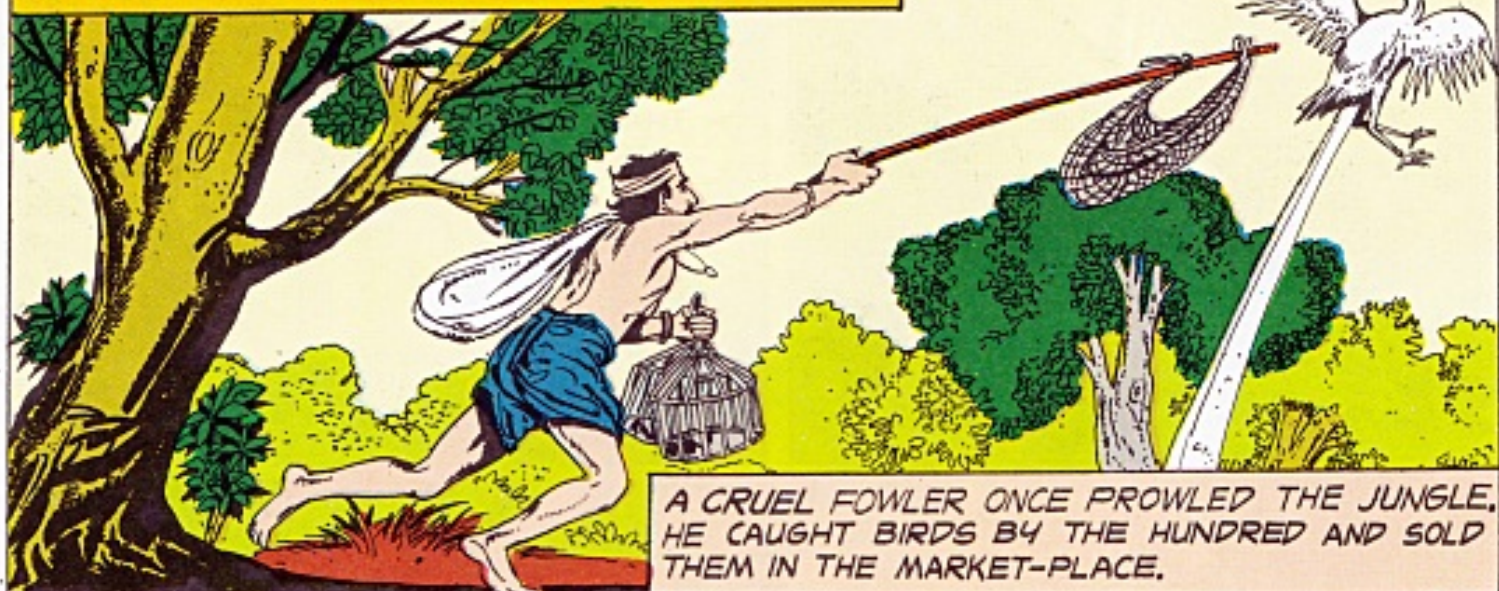
THAT IS MY WIFE AND THOSE ARE MY CHILDREN. I LOOK AFTER THEM AS BEST AS I CAN.







THE PIGEON'S SACRIFICE



A CRUEL FOWLER ONCE PROWLED THE JUNGLE. HE CAUGHT BIRDS BY THE HUNDRED AND SOLD THEM IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

ONE EVENING AS HE WAS GOING ABOUT HIS BUSINESS, HE WAS OVERTAKEN BY A STORM.



HE RAN FOR COVER...



...BUT THE STORM RAGED ON. THE WINDS HOWLED AND HEAVY RAINS BATTERED THE JUNGLE.



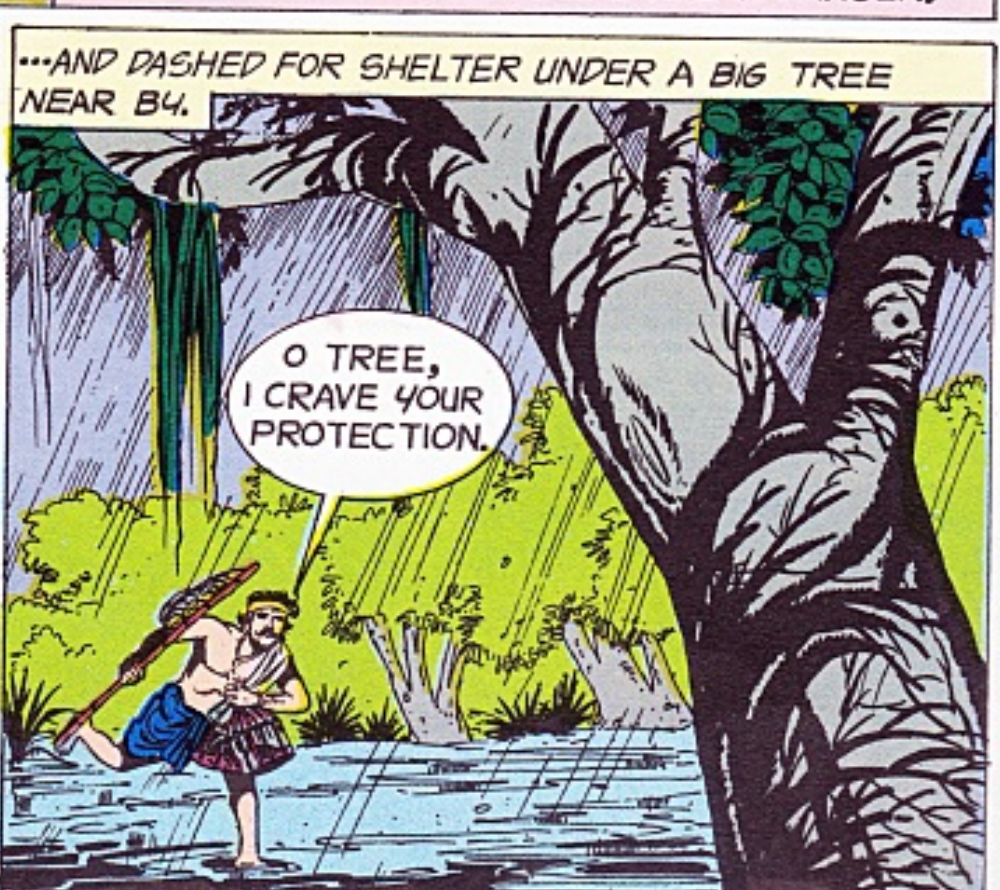
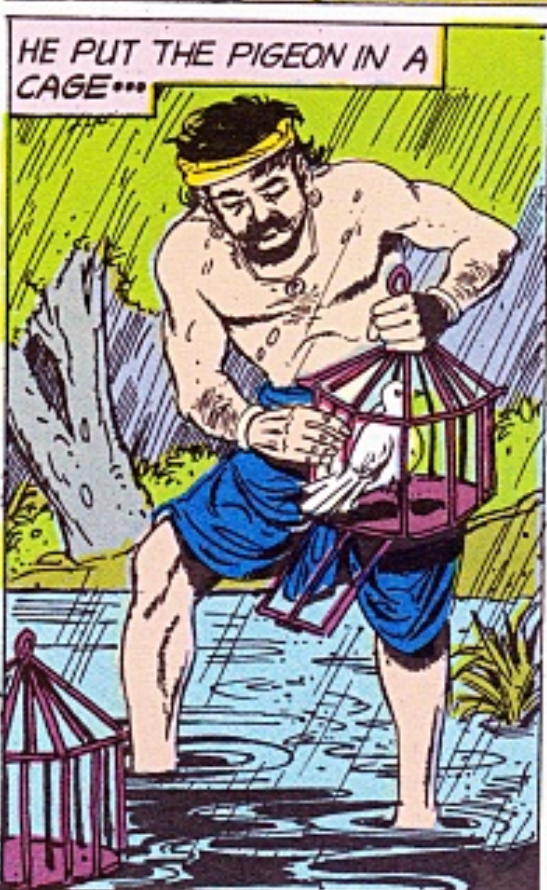
BIRDS AND ANIMALS FLED IN PANIC AND THE FOWLER TOO DESPAIRED FOR HIS LIFE.



WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW? I AM SO FAR AWAY FROM THE VILLAGE.



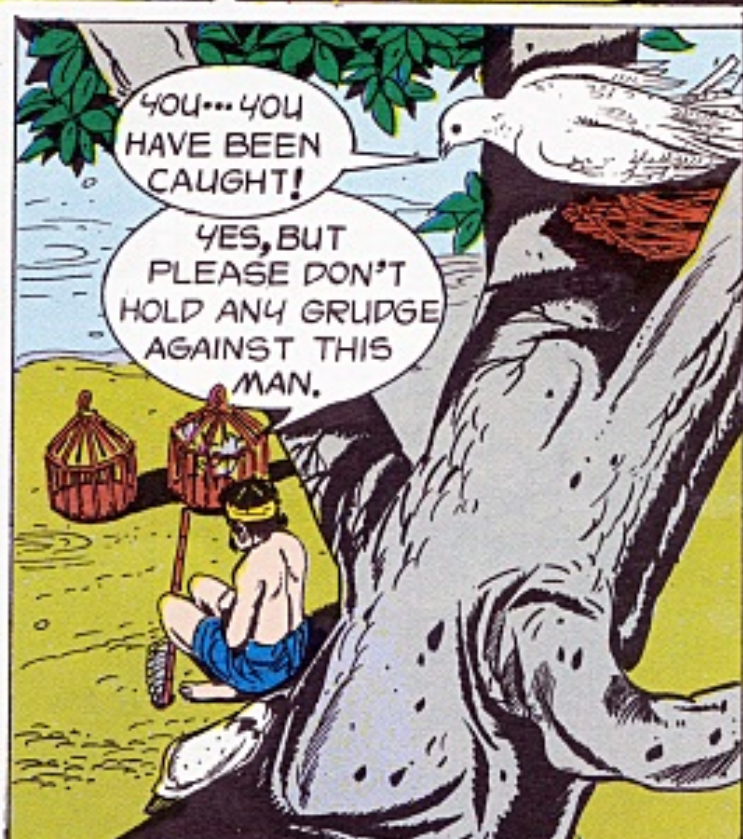
CATCHING BIRDS HAD BECOME SECOND NATURE TO HIM AND HE COULD NOT PASS UP THE CHANCE OF CATCHING ONE EVEN WHEN HIS LIFE WAS IN DANGER.

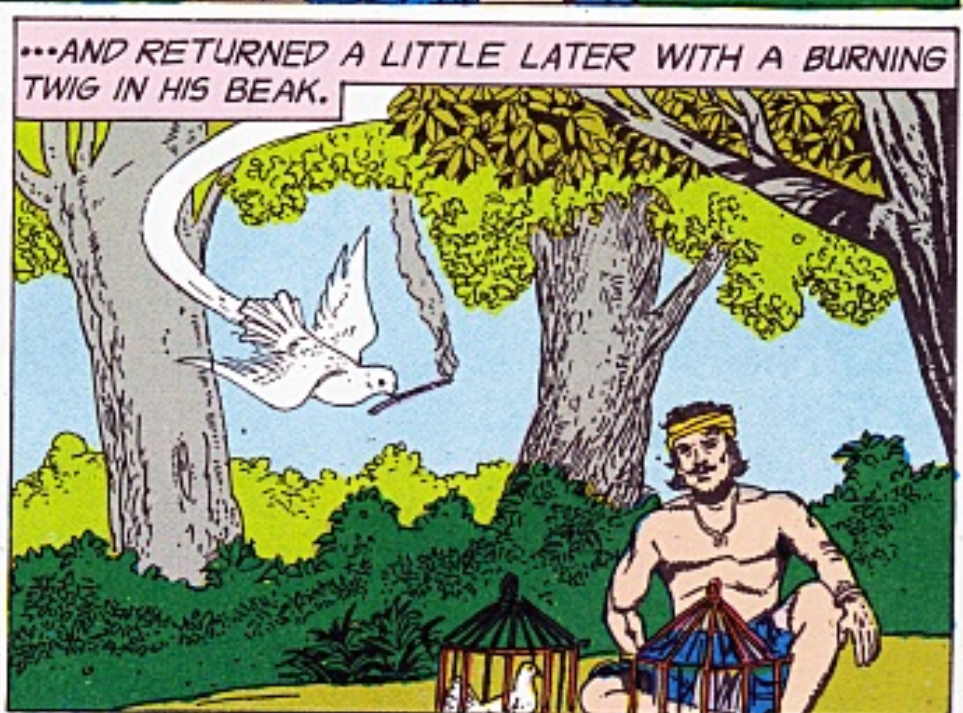




NOW IT SO HAPPENED THAT THE TREE WAS THE HOME OF THE PIGEON HE HAD CAUGHT.

AND AT THAT VERY MOMENT - THE PIGEON'S MATE WAS LOOKING OUT ANXIOUSLY FOR HER.





THEN HE GATHERED DRY TWIGS FROM VARIOUS HOLLOWS...



...MADE A BIG PILE OF THEM...



...AND SET THE PILE ABLAZE WITH THE BURNING TWIG.

NOW YOU MAY WARM YOURSELF, SIR.



AH, THIS IS GOOD.



NOW IF ONLY I HAD SOMETHING TO EAT.

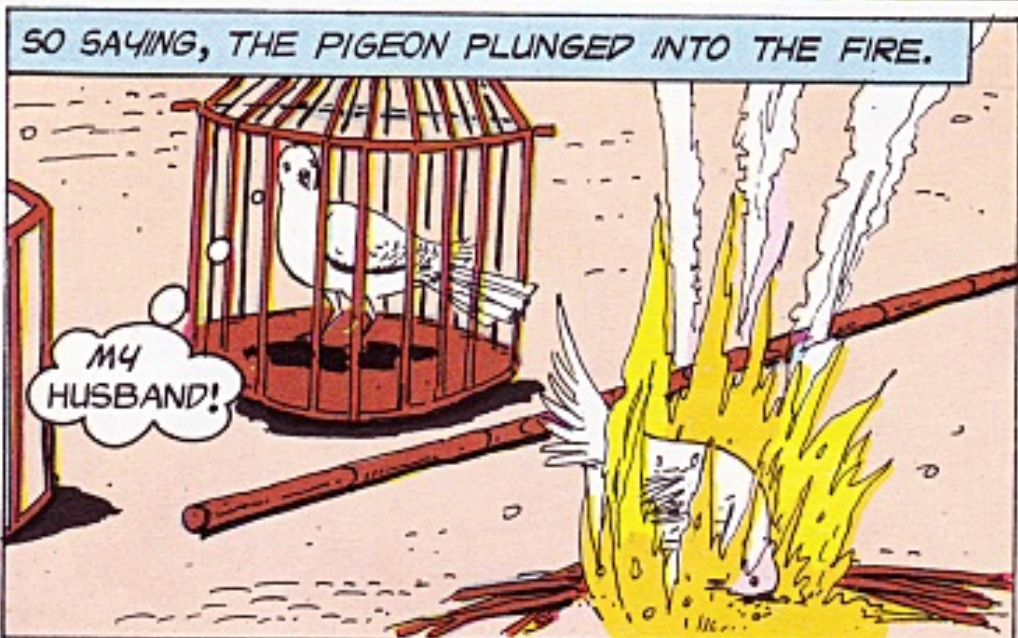
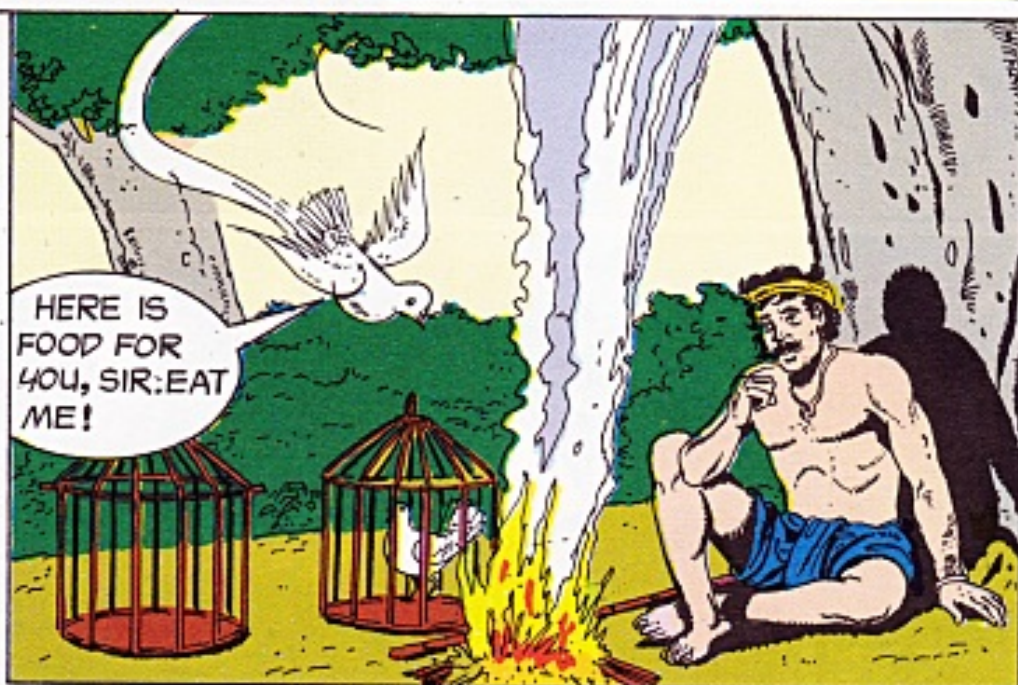
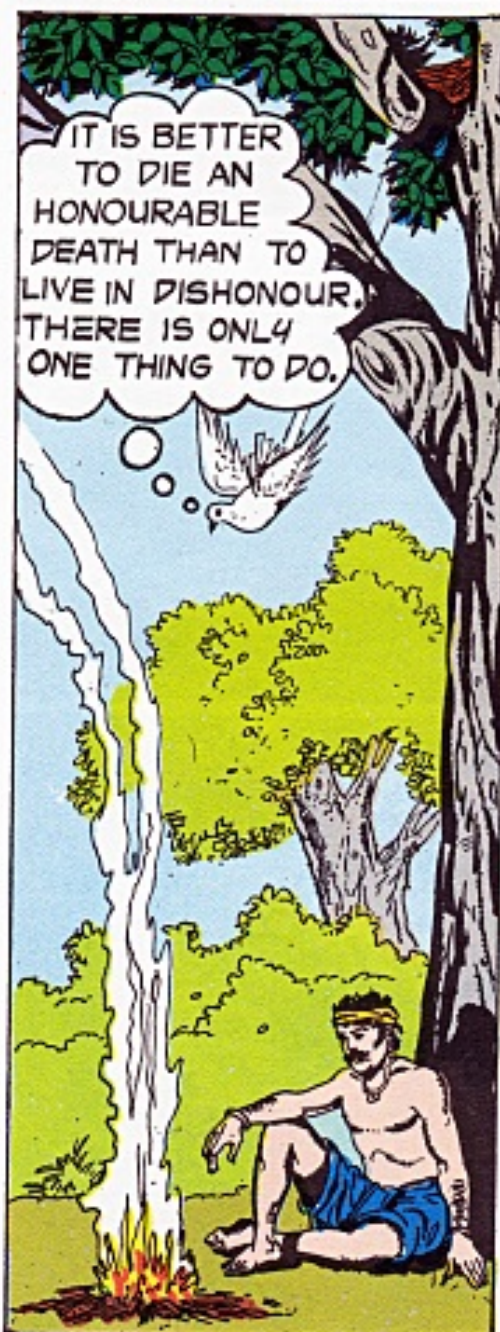
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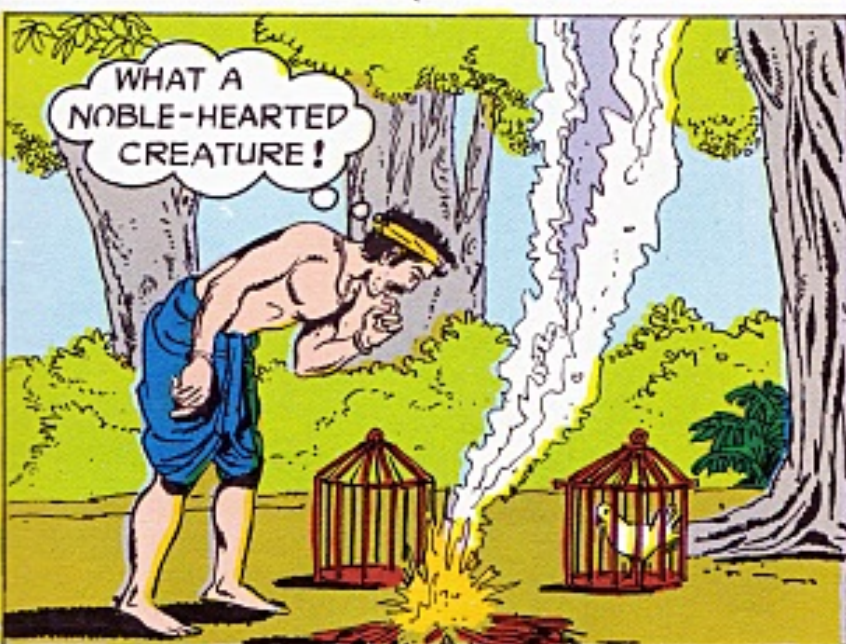


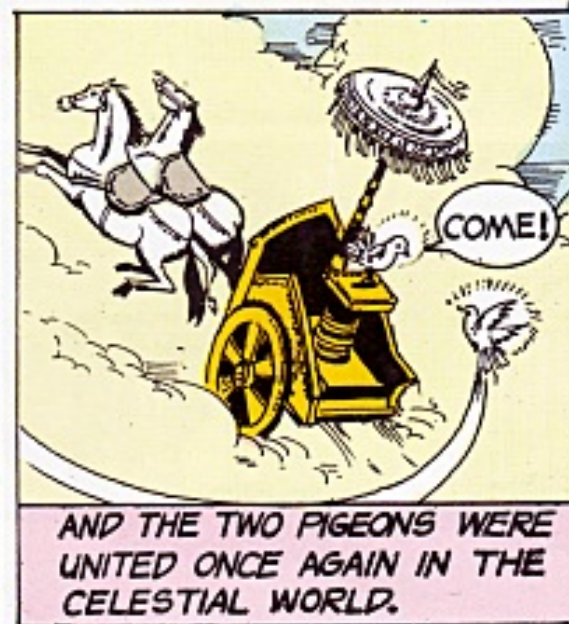
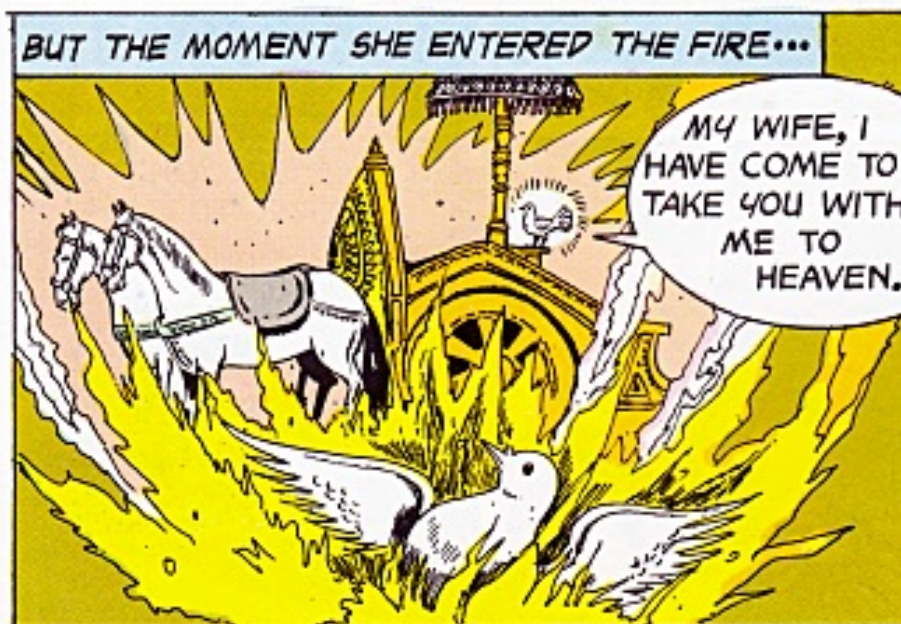
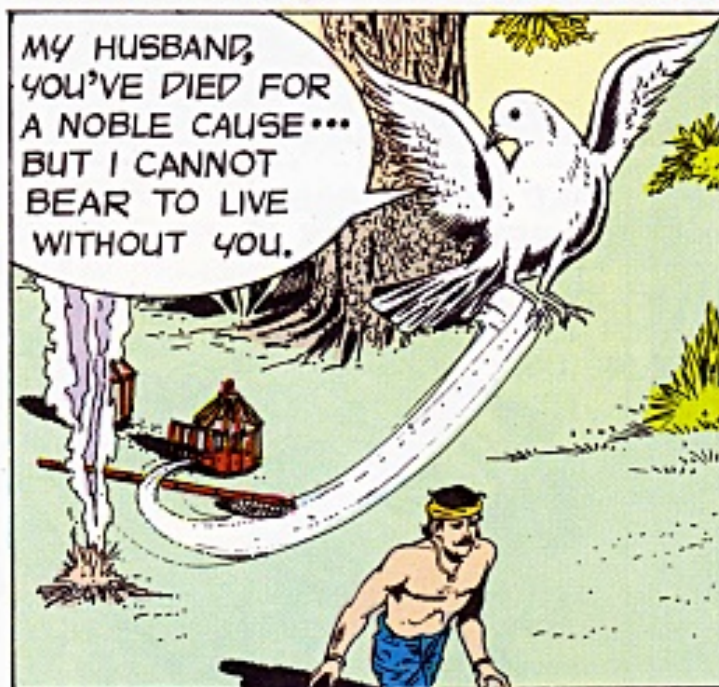
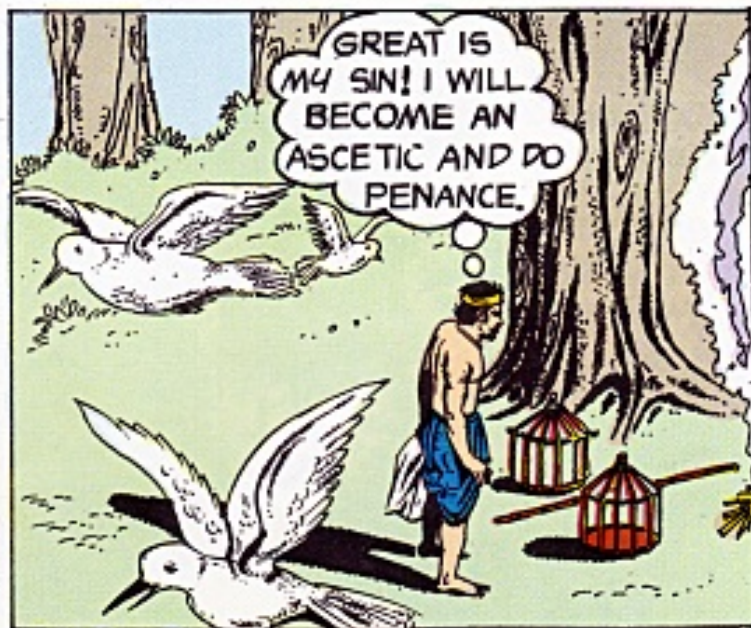
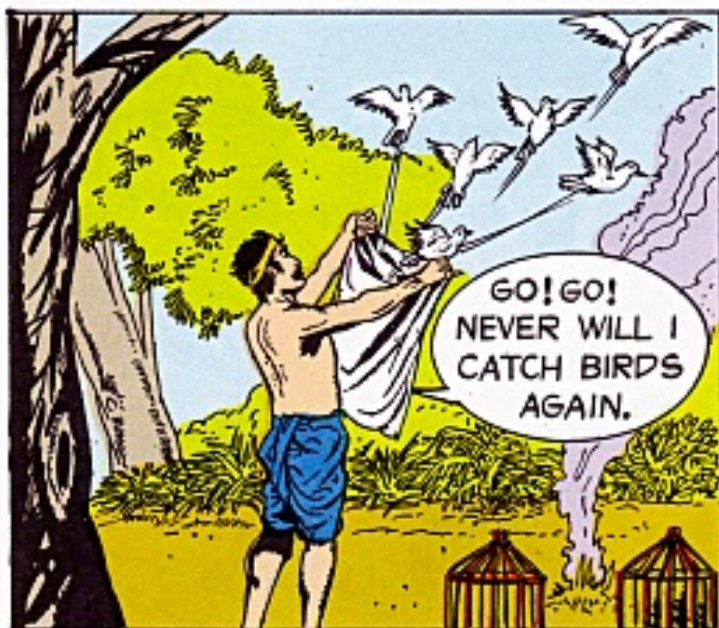
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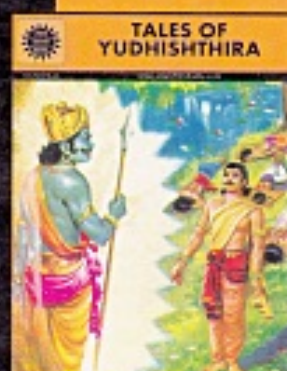
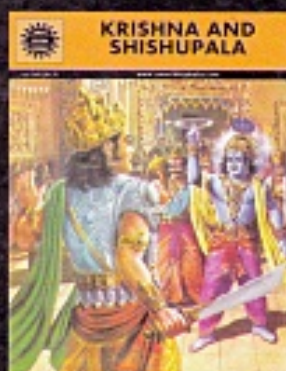
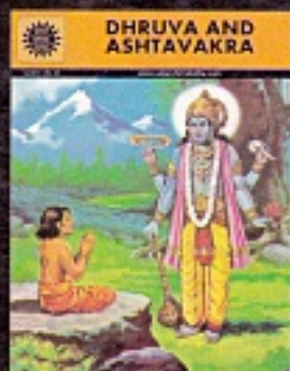
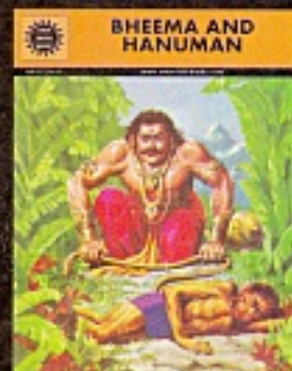


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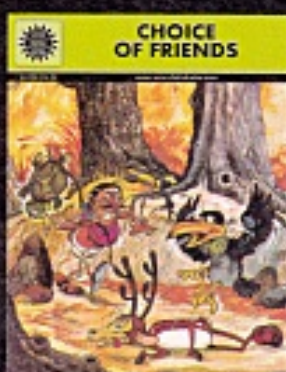
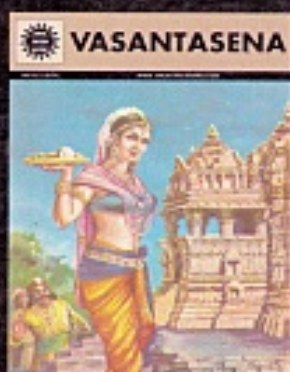
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